Church Polity

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Church Polity

A PRACTICAL TREATISE ON

THE ORGANIZATION AND REGULATION OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD ON EARTH

As Set Forth in the New Testament

By W. L. Hayden, A. M.

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PREFACE.

Though "of making of books there is no end, and much study is a weariness of the flesh," while man's personal and social needs create the demand, books will be made, and the flesh cannot grow weary in a worthier effort than that which supplies such demand. As material progress awakens inventive genius to apply natural forces to practical purposes, so spiritual progress stimulates the rational powers to use moral forces with wise economy and the greatest effect.

The following pages contain the results of reading, reflecting, writing and experience that run through more than thirty years of public life. At the earnest solicitation of many persons of different religious bodies, they are put into permanent form, in the hope that a wider circulation may increase their usefulness, and coming generations may gather fruit from these years of toil.

The author claims some special fitness for his task, but wishes his work to stand exclusively on its merits as a scriptural presentation of a timely topic of much practical, if not vital, importance.

The aim has been to be accurate in thought, clear in statement, and comprehensive in treatment of the subject in hand, without tediousness in detail or attempt at exhaustiveness of materials in reach. There is no pretense of originality in ideas, or language in which they are expressed. Sometimes authorities are cited and their language is copied without specific credit being given or usual quotation marks being used, that the manifestation of the truth may commend itself to every man's conscience in the sight of God without prejudice.

But the author here gratefully acknowledges his indebt-

edness to the publications of A. Campbell, R. Milligan, B. C. Deweese, and others whose books and essays have been read with pleasure and profit.

Especial recognition of valuable assistance is due to M. P. Hayden, who has been deeply interested in the work from its beginning, and who is the author of the chapters on Church Discipline and Woman's Work.

This work is in no sense a creed nor a book of discipline for any religious body. While the author knows no reason in scripture or common sense against the adoption of forms in the administration of church government, this treatise on Church Polity was not written with any expectation of adoption for such purpose, and, if it were, it could not be fairly regarded as a form of discipline until it is adopted by congregations affiliated in a general body. It is given to the public in the hope that it will meet a felt want and do good in the better ordering of the churches of Christ according to the teachings of the New Testament of our Lord Jesus Christ, in correcting irregularities that have hurt the cause of righteousness and impaired the usefulness of congregations, and in helping to unify the movements of the mighty army of the redeemed marching under the Captain of our salvation to the conquest of the world and the bringing of many sons to glory.

Church Polity.

CHAPTER I.

Preliminary Survey.

The trend of religious thought toward the reunion of Christendom on a thoroughly scriptural basis brings into prominence all questions that have relation to this end.

Subjects that have been considered from peculiarly denominational standpoints, and that present barriers to Christian unity, demand reconsideration in the light of advanced intelligence, with a view to satisfactory adjustment.

As in observing the motions of the planets from the earth, confusion and retrogression in movement are sometimes apparent because of the moving earth and its distance from the center of the solar system, which is the true point of observation—so there is seeming conflict in systems that are seen from varying distances from the central orb of truth, that vitalizes and controls the whole sweeping circle of divine revelation. The Christo-concentric view of Christianity is now generally accepted as the true view that harmonizes all parts of the inspired volume, revealing the lesser orbs of truth in right relation to a common center.

The rays of Christian principle radiate from the person of Christ, who gives them power over mind, heart and conscience. All duty may be traced in direct line to Jesus. Methods are incidental and subject to modification by consecrated wisdom and varying social conditions and environments.

Any method stamped with divine approval must always be regarded as the best. In the absence of such approval,

the most effective way to accomplish a required duty should be sought, and, when found, adopted. Where Christ has left men free, they should stand fast in their liberty, only using it not for an occasion of strife and division, but by love serving one another. (Gal. v:15.) The initial point of investigation is clear-cut definition. This is the more important when the line of inquiry leads directly into conflicting theories, over petrified usages, through mountains of prejudice, and across marshes of ignorance.

In strictness, there is no church government, since the church has no legislative authority, and no right to enforce its own will upon Christ's freemen. Judicial authority, within certain limits, and executive power are given to chosen representatives of the body of Christ to apply the law of His kingdom and to enforce the will of the King throughout His earthly realm.

Church polity rests upon the authority of Christ, and is the application of His law in the organization and regulation of His kingdom among men. Its form is monarchical. To accept Hooker's dictum: "It is not possible that any form of polity, much less polity ecclesiastical, should be good unless God Himself be the author of it."

Blackstone says: "All authority among men is either usurped or derived." Usurpation leads to tyranny. It is always dangerous to human rights, and especially so in the church, which should be the conservator of highest freedom. Soul-liberty consists in the absence of all restraint, except as God binds it with moral and religious obligation.

Rightful authority is derived from the only source of all authority, through lawful channel. Without such provision for its communication, just government cannot exist.

Public law is a rule of conduct prescribed by the supreme authority. But no law executes itself. What are called laws of nature are the generalizations of the Creator's uniform mode of action in the physical universe. There must be intelligence clothed with executive power in order to have efficiency in maintaining social order.

In the Christian institution there is but one King, Lord and Lawgiver—Jesus the Messiah. "He is the maker and

monarch of all." He alone reigns over His church. He is invested with all authority in heaven and on earth. His government on earth is not in person or by proxy. He wears a crown in heaven, and His kingdom, in its true, divine and ancient character, throws its arms around every one in every place that calls upon the name of the Lord out of a pure heart and holds him directly responsible to the Head and Monarch of all. Though a spiritual kingdom, not of this world, it is not a mob, nor a fierce, lawless democracy, led by every aspirant and demagogue who has some by-ends and selfish impulses urging him forward in the career of personal honor, fortune or aggrandizement. The sovereign Lord and exalted King has need of laws, officers and organization through which to send forth His sanctifying spirit and power into this world. A book is not sufficient to govern the church. No book ever governed any community—not even the book of the law, or the book of the Gospel; else Moses would have resigned when he wrote the law, and would never have laid his hands upon Joshua; else Jesus would never have sent out apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers of the New Testament, when He had been crowned King, and sovereign executive His will. After the New Testament had been written, Paul would not have commanded Timothy or Titus to reprove, to rebuke, or to commit to faithful and competent persons the office of instructing and building up the church. Nor would he have commanded the community to know them that were *over* them in the Lord, and who admonished them, and to esteem them very highly in love for the sake of their work, *i. e.*, their office, and to submit themselves, and to obey them as those who watched for their souls.

There are two principles of ecclesiastical organization that result in systems that are of elementary and essentially diverse attributes and tendencies. These are absolutism and individualism: the one is based upon dogmatic authority, and tends to concentration and tyranny; the other repudiates all authority in religion, and tends to disruption, anarchy and ruin. A spiritual despotism is the direct tendency of the one, and an uncontrollable spiritual libertinism and licentious liberalism is the certain onward progress of the other. In the

first ages of Christianity, the authority system issued in absolute Popery from accumulated abuses and corruptions; in later times the no-authority system uniformly terminates in the dissolution of society, and finds its quietus in pure pharisaical independency, in which organization and discipline are greatly defective, and which is, therefore, essentially inadequate to the present condition and wants of society.

Whenever individuals unite for any purpose whatever, commercial, industrial, political, social, educational, benevolent or religious, there must be some kind of organization and government. There must be some basis of operation and co-operation, official superintendency and administration, and co-operation in execution, in order to the accomplishment of the object sought. Those who associate together for the promotion of a common interest must be organized into one body, with a head to plan and direct, and with hands and feet to execute or carry on the work to be done. No society can permanently exist without government; some persons must be placed in authority to guide and control, and the rest must submit to their authority, follow their guidance, and work under their direction. So that where there is society there must be government; where there is government there must be law; where there is law there must be penalty for its violation; when the law is violated and the penalty incurred, the law must be enforced and the penalty inflicted; otherwise the law cannot be enforced, the government cannot be maintained, and society cannot be preserved and protected. These are fundamental and well-established principles of government, and constitute the basis of all forms of government, parental, political, scholastical and ecclesiastical. They are true, also, of all organized industries and co-operative enterprises among men, as mills, factories, railroads and moral and benevolent societies. In all these, there must be organization, government, administration, co-operation.

Jesus Christ has established a kingdom upon earth. This kingdom is also called a church, an *ecclesia*. This *ecclesia* consists of persons called out from the world to be disciples or subjects of Christ. For mutual helpfulness, and for the

spread of the Gospel at home and abroad, it is necessary for Christ's followers to unite together in some organization and under some form of government. What shall this organization be? What shall be the form of government for Christians? Has the Lord Jesus Christ established a system of organization and government, or are Christians at liberty to make their own arrangements and adopt their own form of government? What saith the scriptures?

The scriptures clearly establish the following propositions:

(1.) Jesus Christ is King of His kingdom and Head of His church. All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Him. He is Lord and Christ, the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; He is the Head of the church, which is His body; He is the Chief, the great Shepherd and Bishop of the souls of His followers.

(2.) Jesus Christ has established laws for the government of His kingdom or church. He is our Prophet or Lawgiver; we are commanded to hear Him; we are under law to Christ, and it is our duty to observe whatever He has commanded.

(3.) Jesus Christ has appointed officers for the regulation and administration of the affairs and interests of His church or kingdom. "And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondly prophets, thirdly teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, divers kinds of tongues." "And he gave some to be apostles; and some prophets; and some evangelists; and some pastors and teachers." Comparing these two passages, we have the following order: 1st, apostles; 2d, prophets; 3d, evangelists; 4th, pastors and teachers. Hence, under Christ, the apostles stand first among the officers of His kingdom.

(4.) The apostles are Christ's representatives or ambassadors, chosen, instructed, sent forth by Him, and inspired by the Holy Spirit to represent Christ's authority upon earth, and establish His kingdom in the world.

Thus the apostles of Christ, as His master builders or architects, established the foundation of Christ's church or

kingdom, and others are to build upon this foundation according to their instructions.

(5.) The system of church organization and administration established by the apostles of Christ for the government and regulation of Christ's disciples is binding on the church to the end of time. Where the apostles bind us, we are bound to observe their directions; where they have left us free, we are free to make our own arrangements according to the law of expediency. (Matt. xxviii:18, 20; I Tim. vi:15; Eph. i:20-23; I Peter v:4; I Cor. xii:28; Eph. iv:11; John xv:16; Luke xxii:29, 30; Matt. xviii:18; John xiii:20.)

At first, the entire government of the church was in the apostles, and their personal supervision continued while they lived. They made provision, however, for a continual personal supervision of the affairs of the church after their departure. The government of the church is still under the rule and guidance of the apostles, as their directions are embodied in the teaching of the New Testament, and the affairs of the church are now to be managed in harmony with their instructions.

The commission of Jesus to His apostles is the vital *nexus* between the crowned Head on high and His body on earth.

From it came the established church and the completed revelation of Christ; the inspired record of the life, teaching, miracles, atonement, resurrection and coronation of our Lord, and all needful truth into which the chosen apostles were guided by the Holy Spirit. This record is the New Testament, the sole statute book of Christ's kingdom.

The commission presents two phases of Christianity, viz.: the evangelical and the ecclesiastical. The former includes the making of disciples and bringing them into personal and vital union with the divine life in Christ. Preaching is the divinely appointed means of salvation. (I Cor. i:21.) The latter embraces everything necessary to the observance of all things commanded by Christ in order to the perfection of His people and the usefulness of His church.

The apostolic college was founded by the Lord Himself, and consisted of men chosen from among His own personal converts, who were sent out into all the world to convert all

nations. It furnishes a grand model for the church in all ages in its aggressive and superintending character. This model contains a congregational, a presbyterial and an episcopal element—congregational, in that the congregation, *en masse,* has a voice in electing its own officers, in receiving and excluding members, and in deciding questions of prudential management; presbyterial, in that the congregation is required to submit to the elders of its own choice, when they are approved as scripturally worthy; and episcopal, in that there is enjoined a care of all the churches by an official superintendence of competent evangelists. It is methodical, but not methodistical, in the wise combination of all those elements which are the essential characteristics of efficient administration under any form of church polity.

Since *the* Christian Church is not *a* Christian church, but comprehends all congregations of Christians, contemplated as one great, universal community or kingdom, the co-operation of churches in districts, states and nations is essential to the highest triumphs of the church of God in its grand mission on earth. Competition between denominations should be superseded by co-operation of Christian congregations serving the same Lord, filled with the same spirit, and obeying the law of Christ.

Christians are placed under a Christocracy. The rights of God and rights of man are safely lodged in the hands of our King, who is the peer of the eternal God and the peer of glorified man. His spiritual kingdom is the church. He is head over all things for its sake. He claims only the regenerated, sanctified and redeemed sons of men as His holy nation. They are spread over all nations but united in one God, one Lord, one Holy Spirit, one faith, one baptism, one hope, one church. No social system can perpetuate itself, extend its influence, or make its means and instrumentalities available, without a confederative organization. There is always need for government and discipline in the church of Christ. These are indispensable to good order and usefulness.

Government, in its elementary principles, is the same in heaven and earth, in church and state, and under all forms.

There may be abuses of authority and errors in administration, to which all institutions are liable. But abuse should not annihilate right use, nor vitiate and annul a divine institution, or even a human one that is indispensable to the existence and welfare of any society.

The church in a city, state, an empire, or a world of fallen humanity, must have an organization that has the power of abstracting from the mass of mankind materials to promote its healthful growth as a community. This power consists mainly in such an organization as brings to bear upon that community its whole moral and spiritual force.

Therefore, counsel, conjoint purpose, and concerted action, in their aggregate mass of influence, are the first grand instrumentalities to accomplish this end. This requires statistical knowledge, joint consultation, co-operation by executive boards, stated meetings for deliberation, and special meetings on occasion to meet emergencies.

These are the elements of a polity that conforms itself to the genius of human nature and to all conditions of human society, as developed in the Christian scriptures. The right of suffrage is the foundation of all freedom, both political and religious. Salvation itself is attainable only in virtue of this right. A man votes for or against Christ, as he chooses. No man is compelled to go to heaven or hell. In religion, everything must be voluntary. But when a man confesses Christ as his personal sovereign, he is obligated to obey His laws and to respect the equal rights of Christ's freemen throughout His kingdom. This obligation draws men into local assemblies for worship, service and fellowship.

G. A. Jacobs, D. D., in his admirable work, "The Ecclesiastical Polity of the New Testament," gives a clear survey of the subject in his first chapter. A few paragraphs are here transcribed:

"Jesus Himself commenced His kingdom, and those who attached themselves to Him became its citizens. Jesus Himself made known the great moral principles which were to regulate His subjects.

"But the church was not begun until after the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles on the day of Pentecost,

and it was never mentioned, except prospectively, before that time. Men could be admitted into the kingdom of Christ as soon as they were willing to submit to His authority, and to conform to the life which He lived and taught; but they could not be formed into a church until they believed in Him as the Son of God, the Saviour of those who received Him by the justifying righteousness of His life and the atoning sacrifice of His death, and the imparter of the Holy Spirit, and the future judge of man; and this could not be until after His work on earth was done, and He had risen again and ascended into heaven.

"The apostles, therefore, were the founders of the Christian church. They were its divinely appointed and infallible teachers and legislators. They were its supreme authorities on earth to declare its doctrines, and to prescribe its form and polity, to admit into it and exclude from it, to bind and to loose, to remit and to retain sins. They were, in short, to organize the church as a regular society, possessed of a definite character, with its own especial rights, privileges and objects. They were to rule in it as long as they lived, and it rested with them to leave such instructions for its future guidance as they might consider necessary for its continuance and welfare as a permanent institution in the world.

"To qualify them for this high office and important work, the apostles received a divine authority and power from the commission of Christ and the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

* * * * * * *

"The church of the apostolic period is the only church in which there is found an authority justly claiming the acknowledgment of Christian bodies in other times. And such authority is found in this church, not because it was possessed of a truer catholicity, or a purer constitution, or a more primitive antiquity than belong to succeeding ages, for neither antiquity, nor purity of form, nor catholicity confers right to govern or command; but because it was under the immediate rule and guidance of the apostles, and it is their infallible judgment alone, as exhibited in this church, which has a legitimate claim to our submission.

"Notwithstanding the still generally acknowledged su-

premacy of Holy Scripture, the main current of church opinion on all questions of polity and practice, to say nothing of doctrines, has for a very considerable time been setting strongly towards the ecclesiastical system of the third and fourth centuries, to the neglect, in this respect, of the New Testament; and many are carried quietly along with the tide, knowing little or nothing of the shore to which it is wafting them.

"It is very unwise, unapostolic and un-Christian to bind fast what the apostles unbound, and for one church to condemn another for differences of judgment in such questions. The authority to which alone we should appeal is that of the Divine Head of the whole church, as it may be gathered from the words and actions of His inspired apostles. The one safe and legitimate course in all our church reforms is to go to the New Testament as our guide.

"The valuable remark of Richard Hooker is a necessary caution. He says: 'The superstition that rises voluntarily and by degrees which are hardly discerned, mingling itself with the rites even of every divine service done to the only true God, must be considered as a creeping and encroaching evil, an evil the first beginnings whereof are commonly harmless, so that it proves only then to be an evil when some further accident doth grow unto it, or itself come unto further growth.'

"The essential characteristics of the early Christian community are personal, spiritual liberty in Christ and a social equality in the church. The whole polity of the apostolic times was adapted to these conditions, and grew out of them as a natural organism of the common Christian life."

A practical treatise on the subject will cover all its bearings on the propagation of the Gospel, the planting of churches, the good order and co-operation of congregations, and the wise combination of evangelical forces in resisting the assaults of all forms of opposition from the enemies of Christ.

The following chapters will treat the several branches of this important theme under appropriate heads.

CHAPTER II.

The Apostolic Office.

In the historical development of Christianity, the apostleship is next to the life, teaching, miracles, sacrificial atonement, and victorious resurrection of Jesus the Christ.

This is the complement of the ministry among men of our Lord, and is essential to complete that which He began to do and to teach. Jesus instituted the apostolic office with special care, and buttressed it with His own personal choice and education of the men to fill it on the one side, and with the special endowment of the Holy Spirit on the other.

This office is the sole means of bringing the incarnate life and the death of the Son of God into contact with individual minds, hearts and consciences from the day of His ascension down to the remotest ages, even to the end of time.

Through Jesus in person, those chosen for this office "received grace and apostleship for the obedience of faith among all nations for his name." (Rom. i:5, xvi:26.)

These persons thus chosen and specially endowed were ambassadors for Christ, to whom was given the ministry of reconciliation. (II Cor. v:18, 20.)

They were invested with plenary authority to transact business in this world for the King in the heavens, in the inauguration of His kingdom on earth and the establishment of it, so that it might be an everlasting kingdom, break in pieces and consume all other kingdoms, and by peaceful conquest work its way to universal dominion.

From its nature and position, this office is extraordinary, of highest rank and dignity, giving authority and unity to the appointments of Christ's kingdom on earth. A clear conception of it lies at the foundation of a correct understanding of the Gospel, the church and its polity.

The first inquiry is as to the persons of the apostleship. Who are eligible to the apostolic office?

The word "apostle" means one sent, a missionary. It is used in the scriptures in speaking of Christ sent by His Father, of those sent by Jesus, and of those sent by the church. (Heb. iii:1; Matt. x:2; Acts xiv:4, 14; Phil. ii:25.) But when applied to the apostolic office, it is limited to those sent by Christ in person, and during His life included only twelve disciples. The names of the twelve apostles are mentioned in four lists. (Matt. x:2-4; Mark iii:13-19; Luke vi:13-16; Acts i:13.)

One of these by transgression fell, and another was chosen "to take part of this ministry and apostleship" from which Judas fell, and was numbered with the eleven. He was Spirit-filled and acted with the eleven on the day of Pentecost, thus keeping the original number full. (Acts i:26 and ii:14.)

Later, Paul was chosen by a personal appearance of Jesus, and became in a peculiar sense the apostle of the Gentiles. (Acts ix:15, xxvi:16-18; Rom. xi:13.)

These thirteen men are all that Jesus chose and put into the apostolic office.

Conybeare and Howson truly say: "They were appointed by Christ Himself with absolute power to govern His church; to them He had given the keys of the kingdom of heaven with authority to admit or to exclude; they were also guided by His perpetual inspiration, so that all their moral and religious teaching was absolutely and infallibly true; they were empowered by their solemn denunciations of evil and their inspired judgments on all moral questions to bind and to loose, to remit and to retain, the sins of men. This was the essential peculiarity of their office, which can find no parallel in the after history of the church. But, so far as their function was to govern, they represented the monarchical element in the constitution of the early church, and their power was a full counterpoise to that democratic tendency which has sometimes been attributed to the ecclesiastical arrangements of the apostolic period." ("Life and Epistles of Paul," chapter xiii.) They had no official suc-

cessors. From the nature of their duties there could be no succession. First of all, they were witnesses to Christ. In order to be witnesses, they must have personal knowledge of the things concerning which they bear testimony. They must have seen the Lord, heard Him, handled Him, been instructed and commissioned by Him; particularly, they must have seen Him after He was known to be dead, that they might be witnesses of His resurrection. (Acts i and ii.) Secondly, they must be so fully under the supervision and control of the Holy Spirit as to guard them against mistake in remembering what the Great Teacher said to them, in giving utterance to His teaching, in expressing other truth into which they were guided by the Spirit, and in confirming their claim to spiritual endowment in signs and wonders and mighty deeds. These were the signs of an apostle. (John xiv:26, xv:26, xvi:13, 14; II Cor. xii:12)

Without these qualifications of having companied with the immediate associates of Jesus, and of Spirit-endowment manifested in unmistakable miracles, no man could be an apostle of Christ. The assumption of apostolic authority without apostolic illumination and power is a shadow without a substance,—a form of godliness without the power thereof. This is the germ of the most dangerous ecclesiasticism and the most intolerable tyranny that has ever afflicted the church of the living God.

The commission of Christ to His apostles defines the scope of their office. It is the letter of instruction from the King to His ambassadors. It comes from Him who is clothed with all authority in heaven and upon earth. It commits to these apostles all the interests of the kingdom of heaven on earth. When endued with power from on high, they were to make disciples of the nations, introduce them into the kingdom of God's dear Son, and teach them to observe all things commanded by Him. All this involved the full proclamation of the Gospel, the announcement of the law of pardon as Heaven's ultimatum to a rebellious world, the institution of ordinances for the observance of Christ's disciples, and the giving of all needful laws for the government of the church

through all the ages, and the extension of the kingdom of God into all the world.

Whatever was said and done by those apostles within their instructions bound men on earth and Christ in heaven. If they had transcended their commission, their utterances and acts to that extent would have no legal force anywhere. They acted clearly within their commission, which is the legal basis of the universal church of Christ and the most important document on the records of time.

Any man who tampers with that commission, deviates from its specified terms of salvation, or despises its authority, takes a fearful responsibility, presumptuously touches the ark of the covenant, weakens the foundation of the world's hope, forfeits all just claims as a true minister of Christ, and becomes a mere peddler of theological wares, without license from the government under which he assumes to live.

The apostles had the sole responsibility of the execution of the will of the Son of God in founding, organizing and fully equipping the church of Christ on earth for the fulfillment of its heaven-born mission, until Jesus comes again, without sin-offering, to take His ransomed people home. This was done by these ambassadors of Christ and needed no repetition.

The assumption of apostolic succession in office is the basis of Roman, Grecian and Anglican episcopacy. This question reaches granite-rock of church organization. It is the point of widest divergence in church polity, and demands careful examination in this connection.

The high claim of the Church of Rome is thus stated by herself: "Christ organized His church on earth as it was to endure unto the end of time, instructing His apostles in the order in which He had constituted them, with St. Peter as their head, to teach all nations unto the end of time. Just as in any society all of authority and prerogative essential to the office pass from him who first holds the reins of government to his legitimate successor as head of that society, so, too, the words addressed by our Lord investing St. Peter with supreme authority over the entire church were addressed to St. Peter, not only as personally regarded, but

also as representing in his person the entire series of his legitimate successors in this office and dignity down to the end of time."

The main issue here turns on the crucial passage in Matt. xvi:18, 19.

The immense superstructure of the papal hierarchy is reared upon this assumed supremacy of Peter, and the further assumption of legitimate successors in office. The words of our Lord in the conversation at Cæsarea Philippi say nothing of succession in office, and give no warrant for the inference on which Rome rests.

First, we raise the question of fact: Did Christ, in the foundation of His church, confer upon any single individual supreme authority over the entire church in all things essential to the salvation of men (the end for which the church was instituted), and make constitutional provision for this official succession?

If so, it is the duty of all true followers of Christ to subject themselves to this supreme head and render obedience. But if not so, the Church of Rome is built on a strong delusion and a stupendous assumption. The same is true of the historic episcopate in other ecclesiastical establishments.

The visible primacy of the church is claimed for no other among the apostles than Simon Peter, the son of Jonas. It is certain that the words of Jesus to Simon in this famous passage do not declare, either explicitly or implicitly, the authoritative, infallible headship of Peter over the entire church of Christ, since these words are not in the passage, and the ideas they represent are not necessarily implied.

Prominence is not pre-eminence; precedence is not presidency; primacy is not equivalent to supremacy. Prominence in the apostolic college, precedence of the name of Peter, and his primacy in the divine arrangement for an orderly and authoritative inauguration of the kingdom of Christ, do not establish the pre-eminence, the presidency, or the supremacy of Simon Peter over his fellow-apostles or the entire church of Christ on earth. This crucial passage is bed-rock on this great question, and the mighty battle between Rom-

anism and Protestantism must be fought over "this rock." Here, too, we must discover the power of the keys.

Our Lord uses the figurative language of the East. In one verse (Matt. xvi:18) the church is likened to a building about to be built. In the next verse (19) it is likened to a kingdom about to be established. The building must stand on a sure foundation; hence "on this rock I will build my church," said Christ. The kingdom must be opened by some one on earth.

What then is fairly and necessarily implied in the declaration of Christ to Peter: "I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of Heaven?" Whatever is not in these words by necessary implication relating to the question in hand, is not there at all. A key is a symbol of authority. The plural "keys" is a symbol of full authority to open or to shut that to which they belong. The language of Christ does fairly imply that Peter was the one of the apostles who should open the Kingdom of Heaven to men. This was, however, the divine order in the inauguration of the new reign of the Messiah. It gave primacy to Peter, but not supremacy. For the power to bind and loose was given to the other apostles also. (Matt. xviii:18.) Peter received the same commission as the other eleven and no other. Peter stood up with the eleven on the feast of Pentecost, when it is conceded the Kingdom of Heaven was opened and three thousand souls entered into it. The fact that the eleven, equally endowed with the Holy Spirit, stood up with Peter and silently acquiesced in his utterances shows their recognition of the primacy of Peter as spokesman, but disproves his supremacy as head of the church. Because of his primacy, Peter is sent for to open "the door of faith to the Gentiles."

The power of the keys was the authority to open the kingdom by an authoritative promulgation of the law of pardon under the administration of King Jesus, as expressly contained in the commission of Christ to all His apostles. Neither Peter, nor any other apostle, nor all the apostles, and much less uninspired men, ever received authority to modify the terms of Christ's commission. Peter used the keys given to him and did not make new ones. The ques-

tion of supremacy among the apostles was once presented to Christ, and He postively forbade it. He said: "Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them; but it shall not be so among you." (Matt. xx:25, 26.) Peter never exercised authority over the other apostles. He always acted with them. He sat in the council at Jerusalem under the presidency of James, and participated in the discussions on the same footing with Paul and Barnabas. Paul includes all the apostles in his foundation of the church. (Eph. ii:20.) Peter receives censure from Paul for his dissimulation, which is repugnant to the assumption of his supreme headship or of his infallibility. This power of the keys, therefore, does not imply the "authoritative, infallible headship of Peter over the entire church of Christ."

When Simon, son of Jonas, was brought before Jesus, He said, "Thou shalt be called Cephas, which is interpreted a stone." At Cæsarea Philippi, Jesus fulfilled his promise and called Simon, son of Jonas, *Petros*, "a stone." The significance of this name as applied to the person of Simon is to be found in the fact that he was to receive "the keys." But we have clearly shown that the power of the keys does not imply supremacy, but only primacy. Hence Simon is not "this rock" upon which the church is built. Every Greek scholar knows that Jesus said "upon this *petra* I will build my church." *Petros* is a single stone, a piece of rock. *Petra* is rock, masses of living rock. Liddell and Scott, in their lexicon, say: "There is no example in good authors of *petra* in the signification of *petros* for a stone." Without violence to the language, Christ could not have used *petra* to refer to *Petros*, the person of Simon, son of Jonas, when He declared, "upon this rock I will build my church." He could have referred to nothing else but Himself, as presented in the confession made by Peter as the representative apostle. Peter himself so understood it, and hence applies the prophecy of Isaiah xxviii:16 concerning "the sure foundation" to Jesus Christ, "to whom coming as to a living stone," an unbroken rock. Paul declares that "other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." The

apostles were as single stones in the foundation of the holy temple in the Lord, because they were next to our Lord and received inspiration directly from Christ, which enabled them to speak with authority in the church. In this sense inspired men were on an equality. Jesus the Christ, the son of the living God, whom the Father in heaven revealed to Peter and others at His baptism, and not Peter, is this rock-foundation of the church. He alone, "God incarnate," can meet the necessities of "the one holy Catholic apostolic church," and is the supreme Head. Peter is therefore not presented as the rock upon which "the sacred structure of the church is to be built by the work of the divine Architect's hands," as Rome assumes, but has never proven.

Who, then, sustains the characteristic relations to the entire church of Christ on earth of a foundation to a building? Supreme authority is the foundation rock of every social edifice. This is the fundamental primary element of every society. This is the principle that gives lasting stability to every community. This is the cause of all social unity, and this the principle to which all members and the society must be subject, and from which if any are separated they forthwith cease to be enrolled among the members. This authority, too, must be universal and supreme. Whoever possesses "supreme authority and jurisdiction over the entire church, and over every portion and member of it," is the rock, and sustains all the characteristic relations to the whole church that a foundation sustains to the superstructure.

Jesus said just before He went to His Father, "All authority is given unto me in heaven and in earth." (Matt. xxviii:18.) The God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory * * * "raised him from the dead and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: and hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all." (Eph. i:20–23.) Since Christ possessed supreme and universal authority and never transferred it to Peter, but still retained

it after giving His commission to His apostles, and to Peter only as one of the twelve, Christ Himself, and not Peter, is the foundation-rock of supreme authority and universal dominion over the church. Thus, as the word of God declares in the most simple and in the clearest terms the supreme headship of Christ over His body, the church, we prove Him to be the rock-foundation upon which His church is built. The Romanist reverses this, the proper procedure, and assumes—without a single declaration of scripture, either explicitly or implicitly, to warrant it, and contrary to the plainest rules of Greek grammar and usage, that will not allow *petra* "rock," to be used for *Petros*, "Peter"—that Simon, son of Jonas, is the rock-foundation, and proceeds to infer his supreme and infallible headship over the universal church. He knows that frail, mortal Simon could not fill these characteristic relations to the entire church. Hence he assumes, without a word of proof, that he is peculiarly assisted by the perpetual presence of our blessed Lord and immediate guidance of the Holy Ghost. He knows that Peter would and did soon die, and then the church would be headless and foundationless. Hence he invents the fiction of a succession in this supreme office.

The argument to prove the infallible headship of Peter all goes for nothing without the dogma of official succession. It perpetrates the bald fallacy of taking for granted in its conclusion what is not in the premises, either in terms or by necessary implication. But God incarnate, whom Protestants hold as the sure foundation of His own spiritual house, the exalted and universal head of the church of the living God, purchased with His own blood, is the same yesterday, to-day and forever. He holds the reins of government in His own hands. He could have no successor and needs none, and hence makes no allusion to succession in His declared purpose to build His church. The Protestant position is superior to that of the Romanist as Christ is above Peter, as the heavens are higher than the earth.

The Romanist emphasizes the important truth that "the fundamental, primary element of every society is supreme authority." When pressed to the wall on the question of

supreme headship of the church, he concedes that Christ is "the *primary* rock, the rock of ages, the ever-living rock." It is claimed that "by the very name of Peter," he is "the *secondary* rock." Then there are two rocks, the *primary* and the *secondary*. This secondary rock is called Petros; the primary is called Petra. So when our Lord said to Simon: "Thou art Petros," or Kepha, He did not invest him with *supreme* authority, but with authority in a secondary sense. He "communicates to him a temporal participation in His own Divine authority, in the government of His kingdom on earth." This is the truth well stated, and, to quote again, "the words addressed by our Lord, investing St. Peter with 'secondary' authority over the entire church, were addressed to St. Peter, not only as personally regarded, but also as representing in his person—" what? Here is a fundamental difference. Both parties admit this representative character in which Simon was addressed, but differ as to what he represents. The Catholic says, "the entire series of his legitimate successors in this office and dignity to the end of time." The Protestant says, "the entire circle of apostles and prophets." Paul decides the question against the former and for the latter. "Ye are built upon the foundation of *apostles* and *prophets*, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone."

The authority communicated to the apostles was limited by the explicit instructions in their commission, still exists in the church, and will continue to exist in it to the end of time, embodied in the inspired record of their acts and teachings.

If it were the will of the ever-living Christ that the authority communicated to Peter and those united with him in the apostolic college should be continued to legitimate successors, He would have so declared in plainest terms, and would have provided specifically for the succession, so that it might be legally handed down the ages. He never so declared in any terms, and made no provision for it whatever. It is not enough to expose the fallacies of the papal interpretation of this declaration of our Lord concerning the

foundation of His church—its true meaning should be brought out.

For this purpose it is only necessary for the intelligent reader to exercise his right of private judgment, which has been fully vindicated by the reformation of the sixteenth century. But this is not the right of an individual to make definitions to suit a purpose, nor to disregard the accepted principles of the language in which he is studying the Bible, nor to add to or take from what is written by inspiration. Private judgment is the inalienable right of every human being who must give account to God to understand the revelation of God to men for himself. It is also his duty to search the scriptures with the candid use of his faculties, in the light of standard lexicons, acknowledged rules of grammar, the contextual circumstances and contemporary history. This right is cheerfully accorded to every one, while protesting against the groundless assumptions, interpolations, post-apostolic innovations and ecclesiastical traditions of the great apostasy.

Protestantism demands the right of an open field in which to expose error and to vindicate the truth, and thus to obey the apostolic injunction to "contend earnestly for the faith once for all delivered to the saints."

The following exposition of this important conversation is submitted with firmest confidence in its correctness. As introductory to this task will the reader turn to Matt. xvi:13–20 and carefully read the entire paragraph. What is the meaning of this paragraph, *as a whole*, that naturally comes to an unbiased reader? It is a conversation that occurred between Jesus and His disciples at Cæsarea Philippi. Jesus asks them, "Whom do men say that I, the son of man, am?" They give the common reports concerning Him, which are not satisfactory to Him. He then says to them, the twelve disciples, "But whom say ye that I am?" All are addressed, and the question assumes that all may or ought to be able to answer it. Simon Peter, owing perhaps to a strongly impulsive nature, is the first to speak. He answered and said: "Thou art the Christ, the son of the living God." He thus voices the common faith of all His

disciples (John vi:67–69), and no other response was necessary, and hence no other is recorded.

Jesus promptly sets the stamp of His approval upon the two-fold confession of faith which declares Christ's official relation to man and His personal relation to the living God by pronouncing a blessing upon Simon. "Blessed art thou Simon, son of Jonas, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in Heaven." When and how did the Father reveal this to Simon?

The inspired record states two facts that finally and definitely settle the point:

(1.) "And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting on him: and lo, a voice from heaven, saying, 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.'" (Matt. iii:16, 17.)

(2.) Peter said: "Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection." (Acts i:21, 22.)

Peter then understood that no man could be a successor of an apostle who had not companied with the disciples of the Lord Jesus from His baptism by John. Hence the other disciples saw the baptism of Jesus, heard the voice of the Father in Heaven, and received the revelation of the truth confessed by Peter at the same time and in the same way that it was revealed to Simon.

Peter alone was pronounced blessed because he formulated this good confession in response to the inquiry of his Lord. Now is all this to be lost sight of and dropped out of thought in the further conversation, as the papal theory implies? The question Christ propounded to His disciples was designed to elicit the very response which Peter gave. Peter was destined from the day he was brought to Jesus to have a prominent place and exalted honor in the founding of the church. As he represented the faith of all the apostles in

his confession of Christ, so he was to be the personal representative of apostolic authority on the great opening day of the Kingdom of Heaven on earth.

The honor is conferred upon him when Jesus said to Simon, "Thou art Peter," and immediately Jesus laid the creed-basis of the society of His followers, saying, "Upon this rock I will build my church," the pronominal adjective referring directly to the fundamental truth of Christianity just expressed by Peter, and thus preserving the line of thought throughout the entire interview—closing with a charge not to proclaim that Jesus was the Christ.

A Catholic priest and a Christian preacher discuss this primary element of every society. The preacher says: "What is the foundation-rock upon which every social edifice must be based?" The priest answers: "Supreme authority is the foundation-rock of every social edifice." The preacher says to him: "Happy art thou, the priest, for thou art learned and hast promptly confessed the truth! And I say also unto thee, thou art a *confessor* and upon *this confession* I will build my argument." Who would imagine that the words "this confession" refer to anything else than the truth confessed by the priest? It could never occur to an unbiased reader that *this confession* means the person of the confessor himself.

A true conception of the fundamental importance of Peter's confession of Christ as the sole creed-basis of the church compels the view that this rock is Christ. The whole trend of Protestant thought upon the creed question to-day is in the direction of that two-fold confession as the faith that saves. It is the central truth of the revelation of God. Isaiah prophecies of the sure foundation. (Is. xxviii:16.) Peter applies this prediction to Christ Himself. (I Peter ii:6.) He preached that Jesus is both Lord and Christ, and whosoever believeth on Him shall receive remission of sins. John wrote his gospel that men may believe what Peter confessed. (John xx:30, 31.) He also said, "This is the faith that overcomes the world." (I John v:4, 5.)

Paul testified in Corinth that Jesus is the Christ (Acts xviii:5), and thus laid the foundation of the church there,

and declared that other foundation can no man lay. (I Cor. iii:10, 11.) He said to the jailor in Philippi, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved and thy house. (Acts xvi:31.) He wrote "to all that be in Rome," "that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." (Rom. x:9.)

Paul says explicitly of that spiritual rock, "That rock is Christ;" also, "He is the head of the body, the church," and in all things He has the pre-eminence.

The body of Christ is not a monstrosity with two heads, one invisible in heaven and the other visible to a few in the Vatican.

These testimonies of inspired apostles, in simplest and clearest words, present their conception of the foundation on which believers rest, and of the meaning of our Lord when He said, in the hearing of His disciples: "Upon this rock I will build my church."

Jesus, the Christ, the Son of God, and He only, sustains all the essential characteristic relations to the universal church of a foundation to the super-structure built upon it. He is the primary part of the edifice; gives lasting stability to it; makes and keeps all one who build on Him alone, and on Him every living stone in His spiritual house rests by a personal faith. The whole system of Christianity is founded upon the Christ of God, and this is the natural interpretation of the entire conversation of our Lord with His disciples at Cæsarea Philippi. The scope of the context excludes any other view.

When Christian believers repudiate all other authoritative creeds, and submit divers intellects and wills to the authoritative voice and the guiding hand of the Son of God, there will be a complete restoration of the original unity of the church. Faithful men, who continue in the things which they have learned and have been assured of, knowing that they have learned them of the only Spirit-endowed apostles of Christ, will be thoroughly furnished unto all goods works so long as the church is to endure. Thus by the institution of our Lord the building has one and the same sure founda-

tion through the centuries, the "Rock of Ages Cleft for Me." He has prevailed over the gates of Hades, and defies all assaults of Satan and impious men. The wavering minds of tempted disciples may receive divine encouragement, and their souls be confirmed by the enduring word of God through faith. The spiritual kingdom diffused throughout the earth will have the uniting power of consolidated authority of "the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords." The sheep will enjoy all needed watchful care and wholesome pastures, while the lambs may hear the friendly voice, be followed by the faithful search, and folded in the affectionate embrace of duly qualified and divinely-appointed under-shepherds, until He whom Peter himself calls "the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls," "the Chief Shepherd," shall appear, when all, pastors and flock, "shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away."

The Lord's prime ministers were properly called apostles. They were educated, trained and commissioned by Himself in person. They had seven points peculiarly differential from all other functionaries in the kingdom of Christ. These were:

(1.) They saw and heard and knew the Lord Jesus Christ Himself in person.

(2.) They were immediately called and chosen to that office by Christ Himself.

(3.) Infallible inspiration was an essential requisite to the exercise of that office.

(4.) The power of working miracles was an indispensable qualification to the full discharge of the duties of that office.

(5.) To them was specially given the power of imparting spiritual gifts and miraculous powers to others.

(6.) Their mission was universal—the whole world was the field of their operations.

(7.) They exercised, while they lived, a superintendence over all churches planted by their instrumentality, and their authority was paramount to all other functionaries.

The thirteen apostles chosen, ordained and endowed by the newly-crowned Messiah faithfully and fully executed

their commission. When they entered into everlasting rest, the church was established, with all needful ministries to edify, extend and perpetuate it throughout all coming centuries. Then the extraordinary, which was necessary to found a new institution, was succeeded by the ordinary, which is sufficient to teach, regulate and govern the subjects of Christ's kingdom according to the laws that went forth from Jersualem. The revelation of God was completed. The word of faith is henceforth nigh every believer, even in his mouth and in his heart. The apostolic office ceased, and evangelists and pastors became the permanent teachers and superintendents of the church.

CHAPTER III.

The Evangelistic Office.

From the apostles the authority of Christ descends to evangelists. They are the next link in the chain of derived authority in the church.

The primary question in the discussion of the office of the evangelist in the church of Christ is this: What practical value to the modern church have the pastoral epistles of Paul —two to Timothy and one to Titus—which are a part of the New Testament canon? Is there any person or class in the church of to-day to whom the instructions contained in those epistles properly apply, and who are authorized to perform the duties therein enjoined? The determination of this question turns upon the relationship of the persons addressed in these epistles to the writer of them, and thus, incidentally, to the primitive church. Upon this pivot the evangelistic office hangs. Touching this point there are two theories. One is that Timothy and Titus were evangelists, in so far as they preached the Gospel, just as any other Christian may do, whether official or unofficial; but in so far as they did other things, such as appointing and ordaining elders or deacons, or otherwise setting in order the things that were wanting in the churches, they acted solely as the personal agents or representatives of Paul. In this view, Timothy and Titus, and others of the same class, as Barnabas, Silvanus, Tychieus, Epaphroditus and such men, were sub-apostles, not constitutionally, but personally, deputized to act as agents, or, to use a modern term, sub-legates, of the apostles in doing what belonged to the apostolic office, but what the apostles were unable to perform personally in all places where such work was needed.

If this be true, Paul's instructions to these agents in these

pastoral letters have no application to persons not personally appointed and specially qualified to perform these duties of the apostolic office. Specific instruction for the appointment of a succession of such agents would be a constitutional provision for apostolic succession in the exercise of so much of the functions of the apostleship as is embraced in these instructions.

Paul's language in II Timothy ii : 2 is a commission to his own son in the faith, with authority to hand it, with its full content, to men whom he shall judge to be faithful; and they in turn are authorized to hand it down in like manner "to others also." This constitutes a legal succession in this office, which Timothy received from his inspired instructor. Assuming this to be the apostolic office in some measure, it becomes the modern bishop's office, with such functions as Timothy fulfilled in Ephesus, Titus in Crete, and other evangelists exercised in the provinces in which they labored. Among these functions are the proving and approving by ordination of presbyters and deacons in local congregations, trying and rebuking with all authority the elders that sin, and the settling of all questions that arise in the proper ordering of the churches within the given city or province. This sub-apostle theory of the relation of Timothy and Titus to the churches, which was invented to exclude the evangelistic office from the church of this century, puts the churches authoritatively under a bishop, with whose selection they have nothing to do, except indirectly.

The other theory, the one generally accepted by non-Episcopal bodies, may be stated thus: Timothy and Titus, as others of their class, were evangelists, so called because they were, first of all, "messengers who bring good news." That is, they were preachers of the Gospel, embracing all that pertains to the appearing and the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ, whose duties are so extended as to cover the whole field of the applied principles of "the glorious Gospel of the blessed God," because of their intelligence, position and eminent fitness to perform these responsible duties. The apostles performed these necessary functions until others were qualified by their instructions to perform them. Then

they constituted the office of evangelist, and inducted men into it, of whom Timothy and Titus are conspicuous examples. The evangelist is the first permanent officer in the kingdom of God, and his claim rests on firmer ground than that of an elder or pastor. Professor J. W. McGarvey well says: "A special work assigned by proper authority to a given class of men, such as the elders of the church, constitutes them officers." The proper authority to assign a special work to elders is the evangelist in the primary organization of a local church, and hence there is no properly constituted eldership without a practical recognition of the work of the evangelist. He is the minister by whom men believe, and whose duty it is to care for the converts until he can leave them under proper care and leadership. In an orderly administration the evangelistic office is first in time and in authority. The pastor or elder who disregards its appropriate functions divests himself of rightful title to office.

Evangelists are an expressed gift of the ascended Lord. "When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. And he gave some, apostles; some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers." (Eph. iv:8,11.)

The first two were extraordinary, and depended upon miraculous endowment of the Spirit. These special endowments ceased when the divine revelation was completed and the church was fully established and equipped. The last three depend upon native and acquired gifts, and a knowledge of the things learned of the apostles. They were made perpetual in the church by specific enactment, and will be needed so long as sinners are to be converted, the flock of God is to be fed and cared for, and the ignorant of all ages and conditions are to be instructed in the Word of God. These things were all necessary to be done *then*, have been necessary *ever since*, and are no less necessary *now*, and will be necessary in the onward victorious march of the church. President R. Milligan gives the following reasons for the perpetuity of this office:

"(1.) The evangelical work is a perpetual work. While time endures it will be the duty of the church, through her

own chosen and appointed representatives, to convert and baptise the people; to gather the converts together into separate and distinct organizations for their edification, improvement and efficiency, and to have a watch-care over many weak and sickly congregations.

"(2.) Evangelists from the beginning received their commission from the churches, and not directly from Christ, as did the apostles and prophets. This may be illustrated by the case of Timothy, one of the most prominent and efficient of all the primitive evangelists.

"(3.) It is very clearly intimated by Paul in his second letter to Timothy." (II Tim. ii:2.) ("Scheme of Redemption," pp. 313, 314.)

These considerations indicate the great practical value of these three pastoral letters. They define the work of evangelists, and instruct them in their duties, as Paul's epistles to the churches instruct Christians in the details of congregational and individual life. The evangelistic office means a work to be done by an evangelist who has been chosen and set apart for the performance of that work. Without such an office these epistles are a dead letter. They can be carried into effect only by a usurpation.

Now, assuming that the letters to Timothy and Titus have a useful place in the New Testament canon, there is a firm scriptural basis for such an office, and the further questions to be considered are these: 1. What are the duties of this office? 2. Who are eligible to the office? 3. How should the evangelist be selected and inducted into office? Definite answers to these inquiries will be found in these pastoral espistles of Paul, together with approved precedents recorded in the Acts of Apostles.

I. What are the duties of this office? Let it be clearly noted, the evangelist is not a *law-maker* nor an original *law-proclaimer*. He is primarily a re-proclaimer of the law of the Lord as he has learned it through inspired apostles. What was thus learned by the primitive evangelists from the apostles in person can be learned by modern evangelists only from their writings. Hence Paul says: "All scripture given by inspiration of God is profitable for doctrine, for

reproof, for correction, for discipline in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." (II Tim. iii:16, 17.) "The man of God" of this passage is such an evangelist as Timothy was, as will be evident by comparing it with I Timothy vi:11: "But thou, O man of God, flee these things;" and verse 20: "O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust." He must learn the apostles' doctrine, teach it to others, and be "an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity." (I Tim. iv:12.) Secondarily, the evangelist is an executor of the will of God expressed in His law. He must apply the word of God in the regulation of the conduct of believers, and in the discipline of the churches. Note the following specifications:

(1.) Preach the word as to the appearing and the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ. (II Tim. iv:1, 2.)

(2.) Reprove, rebuke, exhort with all authority. (II Tim. iv:2; Titus i:13, and ii:15; I Tim. vi:17–19.)

(3.) Prove and approve elders and deacons. (I Tim. 3d chap.; Titus i:5–9.)

(4.) Receive accusations against elders, and try them, or see that they are tried, by some scriptural tribunal, and rebuke them that sin. (I Tim. v:19–22; Titus iii:10, 11.)

(5.) Hold fast the form of sound words, and charge preachers to teach no other doctrine. (II Tim. i:13, 14; I Tim. i:3; Titus i:10–14.)

Such is "the work of an evangelist" as set forth by Paul, whereunto he must "watch in all things," even though he "endure afflictions." Only so can he "make full proof of his ministry." (II Tim. iv:5.)

Professor F. M. Bruner, in his "Model Church Work," says:

"It is clear from these selections (Acts xiii:1-3; I Cor. iv: 17; I Thess. iii:2; Titus i:5, and 10-14; I Thess. i:3, 4; II Tim. iv:5; Rom. xv:20-23.) that the evangelist was not a local officer of the church, but that his duties were especially those of a *messenger of good news.* He was a necessity in pushing forward the work of planting and training churches, and his existence and activity in the field are as

clear as that of Paul and Peter, who identified themselves with him, especially Paul. When Paul says of Timothy 'he does the work of the Lord even as I do,' and 'he shall bring you into remembrance of my ways, which be in Christ, how I teach everywhere and in every church;' and then in his letter to the same young man tells him to do the work of an evangelist, it is beyond doubt that Paul did the work of an evangelist—*was* an evangelist, sent out by the church at Antioch, as well as an apostle sent by Christ. Hence it is equally clear from Titus that the evangelist was also the agent through whom 'the things wanting' in existing congregations were supplied, such as the ordination of officers, the training and teaching of officers, and the exercise of a general watch-care in preserving the unity, soundness in the faith, and co-operation of all the churches. The Pope is the outgrowth of assumptions of power by bishops, not evangelists. The evangelical office was absorbed in that of the bishops, and the only barrier to an ecclesiasticism was removed."

A. Campbell taught that "evangelists constitute the living itinerant ministry of the church, sent abroad into the world and sustained in their labors by the church. They preach the word of life. They convert the world. They institute churches and set them in order."—("Millennial Harbinger" 1853, p. 481.)

II. Who are eligible to this office? Herein, also, there must be conformity to divine instruction, or the office will be stripped of all authority and efficiency. From this office women are excluded by an unmistakable prohibition. (I Tim. ii:11, 15.) The reasons given for this prohibition are not incidental and temporary, but they are co-extensive with human history, and are founded in the essential differentiation of the sexes, and the position which each was designed by the Creator to occupy in the domestic and social economy. (Titus ii:1–6; I Tim. v:2–14.) This is not a restriction of woman's exercising her gifts for the cause of Christ, but a requirement that she should use them in subjection to proper authority, and so as not to interfere with home life, nor to disturb the good order "in the house of God, which is the church of the

living God." (I Tim. iii:15.) She may be a "helper in Christ Jesus" (Rom. xvi:1-3 and 12) as her gifts fit her for service.

Only such men are eligible as possess the specified requirements. "The man of God" must be learned in the holy scriptures, and continue in them. (II Tim. iii:14, 17; I Tim. iv:13–16.) He must be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient. (II Tim. ii:24–26.) He must be pure. (I Tim. v:22, vi:11; II Tim. ii:22.) He must have a good reputation where he is known. (Acts xvi:1–3.)

These qualifications demand the most thorough preparation, high moral attainments, wide experience and unfeigned and abiding faith. If these instructions are strictly heeded and fully carried out, only the strongest, true and tried men will be found in the evangelistic office.

III. How should an evangelist be selected and inducted into office? The call and ordination of Timothy furnishes an instructive example in response to this inquiry. Paul found him at Lystra, and learned of the faith of his mother and his grandmother, and that from a child he had known the holy scriptures. He learned also that he was well reported of by the brethren at Lystra and Iconium. He would have him to go forth with him. (Acts xvi:1–3.) Paul gave him an evangelical education, and taught him all the details of the important work to which he was about to be called. A gift was given him by prophecy "with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery." (I Tim. iv:14.)

This gift of God, which was in him, was conferred "by the putting on of Paul's hands." (II Tim. i:6.) It was given to him by prophecy, or according to prophecy; that is, by a particular inspiration or prophetic impulse moving Paul to make choice of Timothy for this office, and to approve him in this manner. This was a divine sanction of the person chosen as fit for these several functions, and of this form of investing him with the evangelistic office.

The presbytery united in the laying on of hands. McKnight says: "This is generally understood of the eldership of Lystra, who recommended Timothy to the apostle." The brethren at Iconium are also mentioned as recommend-

ing him, and the same reason will include the eldership at that place.

The number of congregations that should unite in such a service of installation in any given case is a matter of discretion. This approved precedent requires that at least two local congregations join it, led by some previously approved evangelist. The example warrants the conclusion that all the churches uniting in the recommendation of the candidate for ordination should be represented in the special service of official recognition. Common sense suggests that all the churches within his field of labor, if any there be, and who thereby become obligated for his support, should have some voice in the selection and ordination of the evangelist, with the supervision and wise direction of some experienced and well-known evangelist, who is charged with the duty of "setting in order the things that are wanting."

All Christian communities on earth, however numerous, constitute but one church of Christ; and in all cases where public officers are to be chosen, such as messengers of any general character, and especially evangelists, who are to be regarded as officers of the whole body, a concurrence of a plurality of churches by their officers or other chosen representatives should be regarded as necessary, if not to empower them to discharge official duties in a single congregation, at least necessary to give them general acceptance, and to constitute them public, responsible agents of the whole body.

This principle of congregational concurrence by authorized delegation arises from the nature of the Christian organization, as found in the explicit statements of the New Testament. (On this point the reader is referred to the "Millennial Harbinger" 1843, pp. 82 to 86.)

The only conceivable reason for the presbytery joining with Paul in thus inducting Timothy into this office (since they could impart no other gift), is that the inspired apostle might in this way stamp with his official seal this method of ordaining scripturally qualified men to the ecclesiastical offices to which they had been chosen.

Ordination involves the proving of the fitness of the can-

didate by competent testimony, or by a personal examination, to the satisfaction of a fairly representative body of men in the church, and the formal approval of him by prayer, fasting, and the imposition of hands by such body. As this was a time-honored custom of setting apart things to holy uses, and persons to sacred service of the Lord, and as it is clearly sanctioned by apostolic usage in appointing persons to official positions in the church, its authority cannot fairly be questioned, and its wisdom is attested by experience. The ceremony is beautiful and expressive in its parts and symbolism. Prayer is the recognition of God as the source of authority, and of wisdom and grace for the discharge of difficult and delicate duties. Fasting represents the subjugation of carnal appetite to the higher demands of the spiritual welfare.

The hand is the appropriate symbol of action, and the head is the seat of the brain. What could be more suggestive, therefore, of the conferring of office, than placing the hands of the church's representatives upon the head of a servant chosen for special service, to symbolize the impartation of power to act in that particular capacity which calls for all the force of brain and heart in a full performance of the required duties?

Then from this formal and real induction into the office, there flow certain natural and important consequences. Of course, the main facts of such an ordination will be recorded, and the record should be carefully preserved. A certified copy of this record is the evangelist's credential to the churches. A comparison with the original record will confirm a credential or detect a fraud. It is the orderly way to protect the church against clerical scamps and tramp "gospelers."

In the case of an ordained man's falling into sin or disrepute, a similar representative body will be the proper authority to inquire into his standing, and, if found unworthy, to withdraw the church's approval from him as an evangelist. A reference to an accurate record of such action will determine the status of any unworthy claimant. This is the scriptural remedy for a serious evil in the churches.

Only by a strict adherence to scriptural teaching and methods can the responsible office of the evangelist be held up to its high plane of dignity and usefulness and restored to its true place in the ecclesiastical system.

A faithful man of God, invested with the authority which rightly and scripturally belongs to the evangelistic office, can render a valuable service which no other can perform, in promoting the unity, the stability and the efficiency of the churches of Christ. He would go among them, not clad in priestly robes or clerical-cut coat, not with an air of superiority and parading his official rank and authority, but as a brother in the Lord, with the meekness and gentleness of Christ, admonishing the froward, strengthening the weak, reclaiming wanderers, warning the unruly, adjusting differences, settling difficulties, calming troubled waters, oiling with gracious counsel the wounded hearts of the aggrieved, and repairing the injury from incompetency in management, or official misdemeanor or maladministration. In case of serious and prolonged dissensions and disputations, he should be invited to come for relief with wise counsel and impartial supervision, but with a firm application of just principles in the settlement of the issues involved. In the light of New Testament teaching and discipline, such an intelligent and experienced servant of God can speedily reach a conclusion in any possible case that may arise in the churches that ought to be satisfactory to all parties concerned, and will be so adjudged by all other churches. This would effectually dam the chief source of the immense waste of energy and means that has been a tremendous tax upon ecclesiastical resources, and the most formidable hindrance to the victorious march of the army of the Lord against the combined forces of the world, the flesh and the devil. The omission of this constitutional provision for the systematic oversight and direction of all the forces in the entire field of Gospel conquest, is not only the weak point in the ecclesiastical harness of anybody that fails to recognize it, but it will prove to be the point of fatal inefficiency and ultimate failure to reproduce the practical unity of the early church.

The need of something to fill this place is becoming gen-

erally realized, as is manifest in various organic expedients, plans of organization and co-operation. But the true remedy will not be reached until there is a complete restoration of the New Testament evangelist. This important office, as clearly presented and illustrated in Paul's pastoral epistles, is essential to the good order, the catholic unity, and the highest efficiency of the whole body of Christ on earth. If it be not "the historic episcopate" that is so vital to the reunion of Christendom in the conviction of many intelligent and cultured men, it is better,—a scriptural provision for a wise superintendence of all the interests of the church, that readily adapts itself to all conditions of society, and may be extended over the universal church. Without this office the chain of derived authority in the church is broken, and human wisdom taxes itself to invent expedients to supply the missing link that binds the parts of the one body of Christ into "effectual working in the measure of every part." While Christian liberty allows the fullest exercise of sanctified sense "in making increase of the body unto the edifying itself in love," it does not allow the substitution of human expedients for divine appointments.

Another practical question demands brief notice. How shall the evangelist be supported in his official work?

This is the worldly side of the evangelistic office, which must be provided for as religiously and as systematically as any duty specifically enjoined in the Word of God. Because it is of a worldly nature, the details of it may be safely left, as they have been, to the enlightened business sense of Christian men, under the guidance of a few general principles. These are the same that Paul has laid down for the support of men in the pastoral office. Speaking of those "which minister about holy things," the apostle says: "Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel." (I Cor. ix:14.) To Timothy he writes of the double honor due to presbyters who rule well, and labor in word and doctrine, and quotes the scripture which says: "Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, The laborer is worthy of his reward." (I Tim. v:18.) To the Galatians he says: "Let

him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things." (Gal. vi:6.) Jesus said: "The children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light." (Luke xvi:8.)

These passages warrant the following conclusions: First. It is an ordinance of the Lord that preachers, both pastors and evangelists, should be supported by those for whom they labor. Second. Christians should use the same common sense and business principles, sanctioned by the world's experience, in providing for the necessities of Christ's kingdom that they and the children of this world use in meeting their necessities in this world. The application of these principles to the subject in hand requires the districting of the territory in which Christian congregations are located so as to embrace churches enough to demand his full time, and that are able to give him a living support beyond the local and other claims upon them.

In 1853 A. Campbell wrote: "The churches had their angels, messengers or ministers from the first organization of the grand model of the church of all ages. It had its Lukes, its Marks, its Barnabases, its Philips, its Timothies, its Tituses, its Aristarchuses, its Aquilas, its Apollioses, etc., employed as itinerants and local evangelists. They had districts of churches and provincial fields of labor. They had churches through all Judea, in Syria, in Galatia, Macedonia and Asia Minor. * * * Districts intercommunicated with one another; not only churches in one and the same district, but churches in different districts." (See "Millennial Harbinger," 1853, p. 302.) The interests of these churches were compact, intimate and concentrated, and their success and happiness was the occasion of simultaneous sympathy and exultation.

Every congregation should be encompassed by such a district, and within ready touch of some Timothy or Titus, Barnabas or Silvanus, who is authorized to come to help in time of need. He should aid shepherdless churches in securing pastors, prevent the disturbance of pastoral relations for trivial or unworthy reasons, and "strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die" in Sardis and other

places where the church "has a name to live and is dead," or dying, because their works are not "perfect before God." He should assist pastors in his district in extra services, and no evangelist should come to labor within a district without consultation with the evangelist in charge, as no pastor should enter into the field of a co-presbyter without invitation by his fellow-pastor. He might sometimes clasp the hand of fellowship with an adjacent evangelist across the boundaries of their districts, by exchange of labor in special services for the revival of churches and the conversion of sinners. Such a systematic co-operation between evangelists and pastors, with a joint responsibility for the church in a province or district, would stop a large percentage of the waste between the ingathering of souls and the training for life-service of Christ. There would be no need of this irresponsible evangelism, which leads to reports of large numbers added to the roll of church membership, but not to the Lord. When this rebuilding of the walls of "Jerusalem, which is from above, which is the mother of us all," is completed by extending fostering care to all her children through the restored evangelistic office, then, and not till then, a reunited church will have demonstrated its capability of enfolding the scattered tribes of divided spiritual Israel into the one house of God, "the church of the living God." (I Tim. iii:14,15.)

CHAPTER IV.

The Pastoral Office.

From the evangelist the authority of Christ passes to pastors and teachers of local churches. These churches are the fruits of evangelical preaching and the translation of those who believe into the kingdom of Christ by compliance with the terms of the apostolic commission. These assemblies of new converts and others who may choose to associate with them must be set in order so they may properly observe all things commanded by the Head of the church.

The permanency and efficiency of local congregations require that some person or persons should be charged with the responsibility of oversight and instruction in them. This functionary may be called overseer, teacher, bishop, elder or pastor, all of which are used in the New Testament. But no term is more appropriate than pastor, which is borrowed from the beautiful pastoral life of the oriental shepherd.

The stated worship of God must be maintained. To this end a place of assembly must be selected with due regard to convenience and accessibility to the community. A brief and comprehensive church covenant should be adopted and placed on record, specifying the law by which the members agree to be governed, and pledging fidelity to each other in all mutual obligations.

This may not be essential to constitute a church, but it is indispensable to good order, to a proper legal status, and to the highest fulfillment of the mission of the church. It should be effected with deliberation, wisdom and greatest caution, to conform to the pattern of apostolic precedent.

The officers of a single church or congregation, as established by the apostles, consist of bishops and deacons. Paul addresses the church at Philippi as follows: "To all the

saints in Christ Jesus who are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons." (Phil. i: 1.) Again, in instructing Timothy concerning the qualifications of church officers, Paul gives the qualifications of bishops and deacons. These, therefore, constitute the officers of a local church. This brings us to the consideration of the function of the eldership in the work and management of a church or congregation.

The eldership is equivalent to the pastorate or the pastoral office. The term pastorate is used in current signification to represent the office, relation, or jurisdiction of a spiritual pastor. The word pastor, it is well known, means shepherd, and in the Scriptures applies to a man who acts as shepherd to the flock of God. It is rightly used in popular speech to designate a minister of the Gospel having charge of a congregation; one who cares for souls; one who discourses publicly on religious subjects to the people of his charge.

This office is a matter of prophecy. (Jer. iii: 15; xxiii: 3, 4.) God declares severe judgment against the selfish, negligent and wicked shepherds of Israel. The Messiah's relation to His subjects is foretold under this figure. (Ez. xxxiv:28.) A good flock was the glory of Palestine, and the relation of the shepherd to his flock is God's own illustration of His relation to His chosen people, and also the relation of the rulers and teachers which He gave to those who were under their guidance and instruction.

Pastor and flock are correlative terms, and in the government of God the flock has always required the pastor. The woe pronounced upon unfaithful shepherds, and disasters to the flock because there was no shepherd (Ez. xxxiv) unmistakably indicate God's will that every flock of His shall have a good shepherd, as without such a one no flock is safe or worth much to the owner or itself. Jesus is the Good Shepherd, the Chief Shepherd, and has provided under-pastors for all His flock.

How long the church in Jerusalem existed without elders or pastors, and in what manner they were appointed, cannot now be positively known. Several years after the beginning, on the day of Pentecost, in time of famine, when the Gentile church at Antioch sent relief to their Jewish breth-

ren in Judea, we are informed, incidentally, that there were elders in the church at Jerusalem. Later, when the controversy arose concerning circumcision and the law of Moses, we find that the elders of the church in Jerusalem were associated with the apostles in the council which was held to settle the question.

When Paul and Barnabas made their missionary journey to Pisidian Antioch, Iconium, Lystra and Derbe, on their return through those cities, "they confirmed the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of God. And when they had appointed for them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they had believed." (Acts xiv: 22, 23.) From this apostolic precedent we learn that when a church needs, it may have a plurality of elders. This will not be the case at first, several months and perhaps years may elapse before this will be done. A church may exist, and even prosper, for a time without officers, or at least with nothing more than a temporary organization. But when the time arrives for a permanent organization according to primitive models, there will be a plurality in the eldership of the church that needs them.

It is not necessary to dwell at length upon the manner of selecting elders. In the case of the seven who were chosen to serve tables in Jerusalem, the congregation made choice of the persons, and the apostle appointed them over the business. A similar course should be pursued in the case of appointing elders. Indeed, it is asserted by Lechler in "Schaff-Herzog Encyclopædia," that these seven were both elders and deacons. He says: "The seven were both elders and deacons, as Chrysostom had the insight to perceive, and from their double office arose the eldership and the diaconate." (Art. "Presbyter.") Whether this view be correct or not, this is certainly an approved and therefore correct method of procedure. The congregation in some suitable manner should make choice of proper persons for the office, and then, by fasting and prayer and the laying on of hands, the persons se-

lected should be solemnly ordained to the office of elder, bishop or pastor.

The duties and responsibilities of the eldership can best be learned from an examination of the words and passages which indicate the duties and work of the office. There are seven words, five nouns and two verbs, which are used in reference to this office, and which express very much relative to the duties and work of the eldership. These will now be considered.

I. *Elder.* This is the first term applied to this officer. The church in Jerusalem had elders. When the church at Antioch sent relief to the brethren in Judea, during the famine which occurred in the days of Claudius Cæsar, the contribution was sent to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Paul. Sixteen years later, at the time of another famine, Paul went up to Jerusalem bearing contributions from the churches of Galatia, Achaia and Macedonia. Arriving at Jerusalem, he visited James, and all the elders were present. This word, as an official designation, is of Hebrew origin.

Elders, among the Jews, were the rulers of the people, prominent men who took the lead in directing and controlling affairs. The elders of a city corresponded to our councilmen, just as we now call them "city fathers." The elders of the people were their representatives and rulers in the government and management of affairs pertaining to the public welfare. As an official term, therefore, this word expresses the idea of a government by men of age, prominence, experience, wisdom. It indicates that this office is one that imposes important duties and grave responsibilities, and that it should be filled by men who are competent to perform the work devolving upon them efficiently and successfully. It indicates that an incompetent eldership is a great misfortune, and disastrous in its consequences.

II. *Bishop.* Bishop is of Greek origin. It is a corruption of the Greek word, *episcopos*, which signifies overseer or superintendent. In I Peter, ii: 25, the word is applied to Jesus Christ. In Paul's farewell interview with the Ephesian elders, he calls them bishops or overseers. In Paul's letter to Titus we are informed that Titus was left in Crete to

set in order the things that were wanting, and appoint elders in every city, "if any be blameless." Then we are told that a bishop must be blameless. These two passages demonstrate that these two words, elder and bishop, are applied to the same office, and describe the same officer. The word *episcopos* expresses the idea of supervision or superintendence; it involves taking charge and oversight of affairs, including the authority to manage and direct them. Superintendent is the best English equivalent of the Greek word *episcopos*, rendered bishop or overseer. Hence elders are the overseers or superintendents of the affairs and interests of the church. Watch-care, superintendence, management and control of the interests of the church are the duties indicated by the word bishop.

III. *Pastor.* Jesus speaks of Himself as the Good Shepherd. (John x: 11, 14.) In Hebrews, Jesus is called the "great shepherd of the sheep," and Peter calls Him "the chief shepherd," "the shepherd and bishop of our souls." A great shepherd implies smaller ones, a chief shepherd subordinate ones. The elders of the church are to be shepherds to the flock, the church. Paul says to the Ephesian elders, "Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock in which the Holy Spirit has made you bishops, to be shepherds of the church of God, which he has purchased with his own blood." (Acts xx: 28.) And Peter says: "The elders, therefore, among you I exhort, who am a fellow-elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, who also am a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed. Be shepherds of the flock of God which is among you, exercising the oversight, not of constraint, but willingly, according to God; nor yet for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as lording it over the charge allotted to you, but making yourselves examples to the flock. And when the chief shepherd shall be manifested, ye shall receive the crown of glory that fadeth not away." (I Pet. v: 1-4.) The word "feed" does not express the full meaning of *poimaino;* "tend" is better, but to be a shepherd expresses the idea completely. The elders of the church are to perform the duties of a pastor or shepherd of a flock. These duties include four things:

(1.) Feeding the flock. The shepherd must see that the flock is supplied with sufficient and wholesome food.

(2.) Guiding the flock. The shepherd goes before the flock and leads them out to the fields in the morning and home at night. "He maketh them to lie down in green pastures, and leadeth them beside the still waters."

(3.) Watching the flock. The shepherd cares for the flock, takes care of the lambs, and keeps the sheep from straying away from the flock, and if one strays he goes after him and brings him back to the fold.

(4.) Guarding the flock. The shepherd, like David, must protect the flock from the attack of wild beasts, from the wolves, lions and bears that seek to devour and destroy.

These duties, in a spiritual sense, are to be performed by the elders of the church. They are to feed the church upon the word of God, to guide or lead in the paths of righteousness, take care of the fold, care for the lambs or babes in Christ, keep the members from straying, reclaim the erring, and protect the church from immoral and heretical teachers or preachers.

IV. *Teacher.* After apostles and prophets, in I Cor. xii: 28, we have "thirdly teachers." In Eph. iv: 11, "pastors and teachers" stand forth in the list. Pastors and teachers are two words for the same officers in the office of elder, or bishop. The Greek word is *didaskalos*, not *rhetor;* a teacher, not an orator. Tertullus was an orator (Acts xxiv: 1,) but not a teacher; elders are to be teachers, but not necessarily orators.

The modern demand that pastors of churches shall be pulpit orators, to attract and captivate the people by glittering rhetoric and fascinating oratory, is not a scriptural requirement. Paul's speech and preaching were not in enticing words of wisdom, and he warns the Colossians lest they should be beguiled with enticing words. The elder or pastor of the church is to be a teacher of the Word of God; he should be "a learned man, and mighty in the scriptures;" he should "be able both to exhort in the sound teaching, and to convict the gainsayers," by a clear and faithful presentation of the truth; he should build up Christians on their most holy

faith, and convert others to the truth and to the Lord Jesus Christ. In his labor in word and teaching, he should preach not himself, but the Lord Jesus Christ, and teach his hearers to observe all the commands of Christ.

V. *President.* This term is indicated in the following passages: "We beseech you, brethren, to know them that labor among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you: and to esteem them exceeding highly in love for their work's sake." (I Thess. v: 12, 13.) "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and in teaching." (I Tim. v: 17.)

"To be over" and "to rule" are translations of the same Greek word. It signifies "to set before or in front, to set at the head as leader, to set over;" intransitively, "to be set over, to be at the head of, to manage, govern, preside." Rotherham translates the word "preside" in both of these passages. Elders, then, are over the church to preside over its affairs, to direct and govern its interests, and they should preside well, as God's stewards, that shall be required to give an account of their stewardship in the great judgment day.

VI. *Leader.* "Remember them that have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God." (Heb. xiii: 7.) "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you." (Heb. xiii: 17.)

The word rendered "rule" in these passages signifies "to go before, to show the way, to guide; to lead, as an army or fleet, and so to command, to rule; to be a guide, a leader, ruler, chief." These scriptures, therefore, teach us that the elders of the church who teach the word of God, and upon whom devolves the watch-care of the souls of church members, are the leaders, guides, or rulers of the church. They are to take the lead in guiding and governing its affairs, in managing its interests, and in promoting its welfare.

VII. *Governor.* Among other things God has appointed governments in the church. (I Cor. xii: 28.) The original

word is from a verb which signifies "to steer a ship." (Lat. *gubernare.*) From this Greek word, through the Latin, are derived the words govern, governor, and government. As a pilot directs the movements of his ship, so a governor guides and directs the affairs of the state. So the elders of the church in their government are the pilots of the church to give direction to all things that pertain to its management and prosperity.

This examination of the words and passages which relate to the eldership authorizes and sustains the following positions:

The terms elder, or presbyter; bishop, or overseer; pastor, teacher, president and ruler, are simply different words used to describe the same officer of the church. There should be, when practicable, a plurality of these officers in each church. These officers constitute the eldership of the church, and are invested with the governing power. This eldership exercises authority over a single congregation or local church. As a corollary from this, it follows that a minister of the Gospel located with a church as its teacher and pastor is *ex-officio* one of its elders, and a part of the governing authority in the church. When a church calls a minister to be its pastor, it calls him to the eldership of that church, and to all the duties of that office. And when a minister accepts the position of pastor of a church, he accepts the office of elder, with all the duties and responsibilities which that office imposes.

The duties of the eldership are comprehended in two general classes:

(a) The first class of duties are expressed by the terms preaching, teaching, instruction, confutation, exhortation. The elders are to speak the Word of God; some one of them, at least, is to labor in the Word and in teaching; they are to preach the Gospel to the world, and teach Christ's commands to the church. They are "to be able both to exhort in the sound teaching and to convict the gainsayers;" they are to stop the mouths of vain talkers and deceivers by a clear and convincing presentation of the truth; they are to confute error, and establish the truth of the Gospel in the hearts and consciences of men. As a corollary from this, it

follows that the teaching in the church Bible-school comes legitimately and necessarily under the direction and jurisdiction of the eldership. No teaching should be permitted in the Sunday-school that is not approved by the elders of the church. They should teach the Sunday-school teachers the Word of God. "The pastor should be *ex-officio* superintendent of the superintendent and teachers of the Sunday-school. I do not say that he should teach or preside at the teachers' meetings, but I do say that he should see to it that this sacred work is in the hands of faithful and competent teachers."

The entire work of teaching or instruction in the church is under the control and direction of its eldership. With a competent and faithful eldership, a church is in no danger of being ruined by false teachers, by wolves in sheep's clothing, by ministers of Satan disguised in the garb of ministers of truth and righteousness.

(b) The second class of duties includes the ideas expressed by the words ruling, authority, government, management, watch-care, admonition, discipline. As elders, the authority of church government rests upon them; as bishops or overseers, the management and superintendence of the affairs and interests of the church are intrusted to them; as pastors, they are to exercise a shepherd's watch-care over their flock, the church, feeding it, guiding it, tending it, caring tenderly for the lambs of the fold, watching the flock lest any go astray, going after the erring and lost, and endeavoring to reclaim and restore them, guarding the flock and protecting it from the attacks of wolves and other beasts of prey. They are to preside over the meetings of the church, and conduct its worship; they have jurisdiction of the music, and of the singers, directing the song-service so that it shall be worship to the glory of God, and not a mere entertainment to the glory of the singer; they are to direct the work of the church in its various activities; the management of the Sunday-school, young people's societies, missionary societies, aid societies, benevolent societies, etc., all come under the supervision of the eldership of the church. In short, everything in the work of the church comes under the superintendence and jurisdiction of the eldership. They have charge of the work

of discipline in its broad and scriptural sense, including training, admonition, correction and restoration of the erring, and involving exclusion only as a final step. They are not to do all this work, but they are to direct and superintend it. As fathers who are successful in family government, the elders are to exercise the discipline of the church in a parental manner, their duties in this work being of a judicial character. In all their work, they are not to lord it over the church, but to be examples to the flock, and to be leaders or pilots, to guide and manage the interests of the church so as rightly and most effectively to promote its welfare and prosperity. As a corollary from this, it follows that a minister in charge of a church as its pastor or presiding elder necessarily has charge of all matters of discipline in the church. Not that he is to do all this work, but that he is to superintend and direct it. He is to see that this work is done, and that it is done judiciously, faithfully, impartially, and according to the law of Christ. The minister and the other elders associated with him in the government of the church, as stewards of the house of God, must watch for the souls of the membership, as they that shall give account. This gives us some idea of the solemn responsibility that rests upon the eldership. Oh, that the duties of the office were always so faithfully performed that the Judge might be able to say to all in the great day of final account: "Well done, good and faithful servants!"

Faithful is the saying, "If a man seek the office of a bishop, he desires a good work." Truly it is a noble and an important work, a difficult and a responsible work. It is a work which involves many and varied duties, and imposes weighty responsibilities. We may well inquire, Who is sufficient for these things? Success in this work depends very largely upon the character and abilities of the persons selected to perform the duties of the office. Who should be chosen elders or rulers of the congregation? What should be their qualifications?

In the third chapter of First Timothy, Paul gives instruction to Timothy concerning the qualifications of a bishop. In the first chapter of Titus he gives similar instructions to

Titus. Surely great care should be exercised in this matter of the organization of a church, and whenever elders are to be chosen! Hence Paul directs Titus to appoint elders, if any persons possess the requisite qualifications; otherwise not. The qualifications mentioned by Paul are essential qualifications—"A bishop must be blameless," etc. It is not a question of desirability merely, but of necessity. It is necessary that the bishop possess these qualifications in order properly and successfully to perform the duties incumbent upon him.

These qualifications may be divided into three classes, namely: First, those which relate to personal character. Second, those which indicate didactic ability. Third, those which indicate administrative ability.

(a) We will first consider those qualifications which relate to personal character. First of all, an elder or bishop should be a man, an honorable, upright, manly man. He should be such a one as the poet describes:

> "A combination and a form, indeed,
> Where every god did seem to set his seal
> To give the world assurance of a man."

Or, as another writer has said:

> "His life was gentle, and the elements
> So mixed in him, that nature might stand up
> And say to all the world, '*This was a man!*' "

A bishop must not be a new convert, lest, being inflated with pride, he fall into the condemnation of the devil. He must be hospitable, orderly—that is polite, or of good behavior, not a brawler, nor striker, not contentious, nor passionate, but gentle, and abstinent in respect to wine or intoxicants; not covetous, or greedy of filthy lucre; a lover of good, just, holy; he must be blameless, or without reproach, and have a good reputation among those who are outside of the church. This description of the personal character of the man who is to be chosen to the office of elder or bishop brings before us the picture of a grand character. Such a man is gentle, peaceable, sociable, companionable, upright, pious, generous, exemplary.

He will be a practical illustration of the principles of Christianity in his daily life of righteousness, hospitality and

liberality. Of pure and blameless life, he will be esteemed by those outside of the church, and will be a living commendation of Christianity everywhere and to everybody.

(b) We will next consider those qualifications which indicate didactic ability. He must be apt to teach, didactic. As an elder or bishop is a teacher of the word of God, he must possess the readiness and ability to teach, "holding to the faithful word, which is according to the teaching, that he may be able both to exhort in the sound teaching, and to convict the gainsayers."

He must be able to present and maintain the truth of the Gospel, and to confute the errors of false teachers. Attention is again called to the fact that it is didactic and not rhetorical ability that is required. The inspired writer by the word used has discriminated in favor of instruction, rather than oratory. The work of a competent and efficient teacher is less superficial and more permanent than that of an orator. The results may not appear so large, estimated by the number of additions reported, but they will be found to be much larger when viewed in the calcium light of eternity.

(c) There remain to be considered those qualifications which indicate administrative ability. A bishop must be of sound mind, or of good judgment. This is necessary because much that is to be done by the eldership requires the exercise of a wise discretion. A bishop must not be self-willed, but, on the contrary, self-controlled; for in order to govern others, he must first be able to govern himself. A bishop must be the husband of one wife. He must be a married man, and his marriage relations must conform to the law of God respecting marriage and divorce. A bishop must rule well his own house, "having his children in subjection with all gravity; for if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?" A large part of the duties of the eldership consists in governing and superintending; the administration of church affairs and discipline requires executive ability and experience in dealing with disorderly or disobedient persons. He who is the head of a well-regulated family, "having faithful children, not accused of riot or unruly," by his experience and success in family gov-

ernment, demonstrates his ability to manage successfully the difficult work of church discipline. But if he is unsuccessful in government at home, how can anything else than failure be expected if he is intrusted with the management of the interests of the church? The reason why proper discipline is often so sadly neglected, or so unwisely managed, may, perhaps, be found in the lack of experience or success, or both, on the part of the elders in family government.

The apostle Paul had good reason for putting in all these qualifications. Given a man whose personal character is such as Paul describes, whose ability to teach and to govern is such as is indicated by the qualifications required, and we have a man who is competent to perform the duties of an elder or bishop of a church. Such a man, acting conscientiously and faithfully as overseer or pastor, will do a noble, important and necessary work and do it successfully. Without these qualifications, his work will result in blunders, failure and disaster. Would that all church elders were properly and fully qualified to perform the duties of this office! When the eldership shall be composed of men possessing the requisite qualifications, then will the churches be wisely governed, successfully managed and properly disciplined.

The responsibility and functions of the eldership are perpetual in the church. To promote and secure the highest prosperity of the church, there should be a regularity and uniformity of administration. In order to this, it is necessary to have permanency in the office. There ought to be, therefore, as few changes as possible in the eldership. One great imperfection in the Levitical priesthood was its changeable character, the High Priest not being permitted to continue on account of death. Would that this were the only obstacle to permanency in the eldership! Great care should be exercised in choosing the right persons for the office, and then they should be permanently set apart or ordained to the office. The practice in some churches of electing elders every year is not to be commended. And the practice of employing preachers by the year, and voting once a year upon their continuance, is likewise to be deprecated. A preacher located with a church as one of its elders or pastors should be

regarded as a permanent part of the church, and a change be made only when necessity requires it, and, when made, it should be done as peaceably as possible. It is better to sacrifice and suffer than to destroy the peace and prosperity of the church. All personal considerations should be subordinated to the interests of the cause of Christ.

Some things are due to the eldership from the church. What these things are may be learned from the following passages of Scripture:

"But we beseech you, brethren, to know them that labor among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; and to esteem them exceeding highly in love for their work's sake." (I Thess. v: 12, 13.)

"Remember them that have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God." (Heb. xiii: 7.)

"Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves; for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy and not with grief; for that is unprofitable for you." (Heb. xiii: 17.)

"Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and in teaching. For the scripture saith: 'Thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the corn. And, The laborer is worthy of his hire.'" (I Tim. v: 17, 18.)

If the elders are placed in authority in the church, the members are to be in submission; if the elders are to be overseers, the members are to work under their superintendence; if the elders are to lead, the members are to follow their guidance; if the elders are to be shepherds to the flock of God, the members of the flock are to be subject to their counsel, guidance and control; if the elders are to labor in the word and in teaching, the members are to learn from them the word of God, to give them faithful, moral support in preaching the Gospel and maintaining the law of Christ, and to give them necessary financial support.

Mutual relations impose corresponding obligations. Hence the members of the church should recognize the authority of the elders and their obligations to them to learn from them the law of Christ, to submit to them and obey them, to work

under their direction, to sustain them in the discharge of their official duties, to compensate them for services rendered, giving double remuneration to those who both rule and labor in the word and in teaching, and to esteem them highly in love for their work's sake.

Sectarianism seriously hinders supplying the churches with a scriptural eldership, since it prevents a realization of the New Testament conception of the church in a town or city. If all Christians in one place were in one church and under one eldership, it would not be so difficult to obtain scripturally qualified elders. As it is, however, it is very difficult to find persons properly qualified in sufficient numbers to supply the demands of several churches in one place. This is one, but only one, of the evils of sectarianism. Were the New Testament idea of a church in a place realized, we should have all the Christians in one place under one eldership and controlled by one board of management and superintendence, very much as our public schools in each city are under the control and direction of one superintendent and board of education. This would give us the scriptural conception of the eldership and its functions, and we could then have, without much difficulty, scripturally qualified persons for elders.

If it be asked, "What should be done if a church does not have in its membership persons who are scripturally qualified for elders?" I answer, "Wait until it does have persons scripturally qualified." If such persons are not in the church, make some temporary or provisional arrangement until persons possessing the requisite qualifications can either be found or developed. The evangelist in charge of such a church should seek suitable persons, if there are any, and educate, train and qualify them for the eldership of the church. Eldership signifies leadership. We need to train or educate men for the eldership, to be rulers or leaders of the church, just as much as to educate men for the ministry to preach the Gospel. With some temporary provision for the management of its interests, a church will prosper better without elders than with incompetent ones, who do not die, and will not resign. The grace of resignation is not apt to abound in that kind of persons. And their blunders in office,

and their willfulness in refusing to surrender the office when called upon to do so by the church, sometimes result in disaster and ruin to the church. Paul says to Timothy: "Lay hands hastily on no man, neither be partaker of other men's sins; keep thyself pure." (I Tim. v: 22.) Great care should be exercised that only proper persons are ordained to the pastoral office. The wisdom that is from above, and not human wisdom, should guide in this matter, and in all things that pertain to the welfare and prosperity of the church of Christ. The endeavor should be to reproduce the New Testament church in membership, in organization, in officers, in management, and in earnest and faithful work for Christ, and to conform more and more perfectly in individual and church life to the pattern given in the New Testament, and thus "grow up in all things into him who is the head, even Christ, from whom all the body fitly framed and knit together, through that which every joint supplieth, according to the working in due measure of each several part, maketh the increase of the body unto the building up of itself in love." (Eph. iv: 15, 16.)

The number of elders or pastors in any local church can only be settled by a wise expediency. The style of the inspired writers is to speak of all the disciples of our Lord in any city or center of population, with its surrounding rural districts, as the church in that city or province, though they may have met in several assemblies. It is said that the church in Jerusalem assembled in fifty different places. The leaders of these several assemblies were the elders at Jerusalem.

The statement already cited that Paul and Barnabas "ordained elders in every church" (Acts xiv: 23) is the nearest assertion of a plurality of elders in each congregation to be found in sacred history. The only fair inferences from this fact are that the church existed prior to the ordination of elders, and that every church circumstanced as the church in the cities named may have plurality of elders.

The fact that pastors were to be supported, and the elders were forbidden to take the oversight "for filthy lucre," (Pet. v: 1-3) suggests the practical solution of the problem. When

speaking of him "who feedeth the flock," and the provisions of the law of Moses for them "which minister about holy things," Paul says, "Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel." (I Cor. ix: 7-14.)

This is the ordinance of the Lord for the support of pastors and evangelists. A congregation will not sustain more pastors than is needed to properly tend the flock, and can justly claim only such part of his time and services as it can fairly recompense.

There is not sufficient scriptural warrant for the distinction between teaching elders and ruling elders, as aptness to teach as well as to rule is a requisite qualification for the office. A prudent pastor, however, will always have near him, in counsel and approval, the intelligent, pious and influential members of the congregation, whether by his own choice or by the selection of the church. A humble man will be glad to have wise and godly men to share the responsibility of his delicate and often trying position.

But the practical lesson is that the churches of Christ everywhere should make systematic efforts to furnish themselves, either alone or in combination with those contiguous to them, with such Christian instruction and oversight as are adequate to the present demands of society and the present elevation of the intellectual and spiritual standard. A faithful pastor's study is the watch-tower on the walls of salvation, from which he discerns approaching danger and arms himself for successful guarding of the spiritual interests of his people.

CHAPTER V.

The Deacon's Office.

The conjoining of "bishops and deacons" in Paul's letter "to the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi," brings them into peculiar prominence. What that prominence is as to bishops is not a matter of conjecture. They are the official superintendents of the church, the pastors of the flock. The association of deacons with them implies an official relation of some kind. Its precise nature is not so clearly defined as is that of pastors.

The term deacon is a transliteration of the Greek *diakonos*. This word is applied to servants at a feast (John ii:5–9); to a civil officer, as a minister of God (Rom. xiii:4); to Jesus Christ as a minister of the circumcision (Rom. xv:8); to preachers as ministers by whom we believe (I Cor. iii:5); to Phebe, a servant of the church (Rom. xvi:1); and to a class of brethren who are required to have certain specified qualifications (I Tim. iii:8–13). These qualifications are about the same as those required in bishops, so far as they relate to personal fitness. This suggests that these brethren were called into official relation to the church, as that would be an approval of their characters, and no church can afford to stamp with approbation, as an office-bearer, any man who is not a fair representative of Christian profession.

Aptness to teach is not among the qualifications for this service, hence these deacons were not preachers as such, though if they possessed gifts of speech it would not disqualify them for the position, and might be exercised on occasion. So if they use the office of a deacon well, they purchase to themselves a good degree and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus.

The chief indication of the special service to be rendered

by this class of officials is found in the selection of the seven men to attend to the daily ministration when there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews because their widows were neglected. (Acts i:6.) This emergency called for a special service,—a *diakonia*,—the service to be rendered by a *diakonos*. Whatever this was belongs to work to be done by those who were selected for the particular duty then required. It was not preaching, but was to relieve the preachers, so they need not leave the Word of God. The twelve apostles demanded men "of honest report, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom." The whole multitude of disciples chose the seven brethren of this description, and set them before the apostles, who appointed them over this business by prayer and laying on of hands. They approved the choice, and inducted these deacons into office by formal ordination. This was evidently in the mind of Paul in his instruction to Timothy. He specifies the qualities that deacons must have. (I Tim. iii:8–13.) They must be *grave*, *i. e.*, men of weight in the community, and command the respect of those without and the acquiescence of those within. They must shun duplicity, wine-drinking and greed of gain, but hold the faith in a pure conscience. Like bishops, they must be first *proved*, then *approved*, as being found blameless. Then, and not till then, "let them use the office of a deacon." They should be exemplary in their domestic relations and in the management of their households. Their wives, also, should have like dignity and prudence, that they may not injure the usefulness of their husbands, and may serve as deaconesses if called to render such service. Phebe, our sister, was a deaconess of the church in Cenchrea. (Rom. xvi:1.) Reference is given to married persons having but one wife, but not as excluding those who are unmarried and otherwise qualified, when circumstances demand their service. The nature of the business over which the deacons are placed is to "serve tables."

It has been truly said they must provide for three tables in the church of the living God. These are the table of the Lord, the table of poor saints, and the table of the preacher. That is, the deacon's duties include the care of the house of

worship and making provision for the orderly administration of the ordinances of the Lord, the oversight of the needy members of the congregation, and the raising of funds for the support of the pastor and for the general enterprises of the church. They attend to the financial, material and other interests of the church, under the supervision of the pastor and other elders. These are highly important duties, and essential to the prosperity of a congregation. If there were no hint of a deacon's office in the Holy Scriptures, the church would need to constitute such an office, in the exercise of liberty to do in the wisest way whatever is necessary to be done in the fulfillment of its mission. The most natural interpretation of the passages that mention deacons in connection with bishops gives sufficient recognition of such office by divine authority.

The efficiency of the church depends largely upon a prompt, systematic and faithful discharge of the duties that belong to this office. The best business talent that is available should be enlisted in this service and charged with its responsibility. The same business principles which experience has attested in successful enterprises of worldly affairs should be applied in Christian work.

These require regular meetings of this board of ecclesiastical financiers, a careful record of official transactions, an accurate inventory of resources and prospective income, and a complete statement of necessary outlays. As the church is in fact a joint-stock company, in which each member is pledged to contribute for the expenses of the establishment according to ability, an apportionment should be made as nearly equitable as may be in the judgment of the deacons, assigning to each member such portion of the needed expenditures that the congregation has decided upon as accords with his proportionate ability.

Since they cannot be supposed to know the exact ability of each member, they can only approximate a just apportionment, which should be subject to revision upon submission of the amount to each individual for his acceptance, with such modification as meets his approval. The expenses should be kept within the income, unless there be a margin that can

be counted on to cover any deficit that may appear at the end of the year.

A collection by envelopes should be taken at every Lord's Day service, so that the channel of communication from the private purses to the public treasury may be ever open and clearly understood, and due credit may be given to individual contributors. This is an act of worship, the same as preaching, praise, prayer and communion. It is "the fellowship" (Acts ii:42), in distinction from other religious privileges in which the worshippers share in common. The *koinonia* of Christians in regard to money is a contribution (Rom. xv:26) in which all participate equally, in the measure of ability of each, for the purposes of the church. These embrace two specified objects, viz.: "for the poor saints" and "for the gospel," (Phil. i:5 and iv:15–18) and implicitly include all benevolent and evangelistic enterprises. These sweep over the whole field of Christian activities.

The weekly contribution was ordered by Paul in the churches of Galatia and at Corinth (I Cor. xvi:1, 2), and presumably it was practiced with his sanction by them of Macedonia and Achaia. This is the sanctified common sense of an apostle, which is an approved precedent for using the highest wisdom at command to meet the necessities of the cause under existing surroundings. Inspiration does not turn sensible men into impracticables, and conversion to Christ does not change bright business men into slavish imitators of old methods that were adapted to conditions of society that vary with times and environments.

The Pauline law of expediency has full force in this field of prudential arrangement. "All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient; all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not." (I Cor. x:23.)

Whatever is lawful, that is, moral, for any man to do, is right for a Christian to do. But expediency limits the law of universal right by excluding those things which, though not wrong, do not edify, or are not successful. This law approves, if not demands, the use of any righteous means to accomplish a required end, and enlightened wisdom chooses the best methods within reach, guided by whatever light the

Word of God throws upon the subject in hand. This law of expediency is excluded from matters of faith and morals, but determines matters of policy within the wide range of human discretion. The discretionary affairs of the church come chiefly within the duties of the deacon's office, but the same principle applies in the administration of spiritual as well as temporal affairs, and should control in all things that are left to human judgment in securing the orderly and the best attainable service, in praise, teaching, ruling, and every mode of church edification. The infinite wisdom of the Supreme Ruler in the Kingdom of Heaven has given widest scope for the freest exercise of all the consecrated powers of redeemed man in building up the cause of the Redeemer, and in the promotion of human welfare.

The deacon's office is one of great dignity and responsibility. It may be magnified in several directions, far beyond anything that is usually assigned to it in the churches. It calls for high order of talent, and any congregation is fortunate indeed that has suitable persons in its membership to discharge its duties promptly and systematically.

The board of deacons should consist of three to nine persons, according to the number of the congregation and the eligible members. They would properly constitute the board of trustees. As this is a civil rather than an ecclesiastical office, they should be elected in accordance with civil law, and the tenure of office would better be limited to a term of years, say three, and a part of the board elected each year. The fact of being deacons would not constitute them trustees, nor hinder their election to that responsibility. They should be incorporated under the laws of the state, so as to become the legal representatives of the church in all matters affecting the property rights and the financial interests of the church. They would then be competent to receive bequests from persons who might wish to place means in their hands in trust for the use of the congregation, and could be held legally accountable for the faithful execution of the trust.

A congregational seal should be provided for each local church, to stamp all official papers issued in behalf of the body. This would be a guarantee against frauds that are so

frequently perpetrated by unscrupulous professors upon unsuspecting communities.

The deacons are the almoners of the church, and this phase of their work may be extended to embrace any form of wise beneficiary association. The church is not only a benevolent institution, but a mutual benefit society. If it were up to its best, equipped for its fullest opportunity and working out its highest efficiency, there would be no occasion for members to unite with worldly societies to make provision for themselves in the event of sickness or misfortune, and for becoming burial when death comes.

There is no reason why a church may not embrace every beneficiary feature of prudent and well-conducted associations of a moral and social character in a Christian administration of its affairs by a competent diaconate, for the benefit of all its members who will avail themselves of these advantages. There are many reasons why Christians should not be obliged to enter into association with worldly people to obtain the benefits they wish which commend themselves to prudent foresight. The church that would accomplish the most for the spiritual welfare of mankind must have the profoundest sympathy for the temporal welfare of its own fellowship, and of those in touch of its influence and agencies. While it should be a hive of industrial activities, the deacons are the official directors of the temporalities of the church, which should sweep over the entire circle of congregational and individual well-being within the circumference of associated moral, social and religious life. The scriptural recognition of the deacon's office, and the requisites for it, and the large liberty secured in the Gospel of Christ, lift it up to a dignity and lofty plane of usefulness and of blessing to the church and the world far beyond any present attainment.

CHAPTER VI.

WOMAN'S WORK.

The chief question to be considered under this head, as it stands related to church polity, is this: *According to the scriptures, have women a right to be pastors and evangelists?* It is important that the question be clearly defined and correctly understood. The question is not, "May women sing, pray and speak in religious meetings, teach in Sunday-school, or make temperance addresses?" At proper times and places, and under proper circumstances, a woman may do any of these that she is capable of doing. She has a right to enjoy and exercise the freedom permitted to her under the law of liberty, and wherein that law does not restrict her she is not to be bound. The question is this: "May women be pastors and evangelists? May they occupy these important official positions in the government and work of the church of Christ?"

To answer this properly, it will be necessary to consider some other questions, which underlie this one, and which must be understood in order to answer this question correctly. These other questions are two in number, and are as follows:

(1.) *What is the true relation of the sexes to each other?*

(2.) *What are the principles of the law of Christ which pertain to these offices which He has established in His church?*

In answering these questions, the Word of God is the supreme and final authority. It is here assumed that the teaching of the New Testament bearing upon this subject is as applicable to this age as it was at the time it was written, since the Gospel of Christ is to continue to the end of time, and is for all nations. It is not for us to explain away any part of scripture teaching. Whatever the scriptures teach concerning any subject should be accepted as an end of all

controversy. "Where the scriptures speak, we speak; and where the scriptures are silent, we are silent." The only question then is: "What do the scriptures teach with reference to this subject?" Our appeal is "to the law and the testimony."

I. *What is the relation of the sexes to each other?* In considering this question, attention is first invited to the Mosaic account of the creation of man: "And God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them." (Gen. i:27.) "And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an helpmeet for him." (Marg. R. V.—or "answering to him." Gen. ii:18.) "And the Lord caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; and the rib which the Lord God had taken from the man made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. And the man said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called woman, because she was taken out of man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife; and they shall be one flesh." (Gen. ii:21–24.)

From this account it is evident that man and woman are of the same nature, constituting one race, but differing in sex, and in those peculiarities which belong to sex. They are companions and complements of each other. Having the same nature, they have many faculties and characteristics in common; differing in sex, they have corresponding differences in physical, mental and moral endowment. Generally, women are smaller and weaker than men; the female organism is more delicate and sensitive than the male organism. For this reason, woman is less able than man to endure the strain of public life, and to bear the excitement incident to large assemblies. Physically, man is stronger and hardier, and woman "the weaker vessel." Hence, woman needs protection, and man is the protector.

Intellectually, the sexes may be considered equal, and yet they are not entirely the same. Among men, as a rule, the intellectual, among women the emotional, predominates.

Hence, in matters that require cool, critical, impartial judgment, men are better fitted to act than women; in matters that call out the sympathies of humanity, women are better qualified than men. Men are more competent than women to wear the judicial ermine; women are better than men to minister to the sick and suffering.

> "O, woman! in our hours of ease
> Uncertain, coy, and hard to please,
> And variable as the shade
> By the light, quivering aspen made;
> When pain and anguish wring the brow,
> A ministering angel thou!"

Socially, man and woman are equal. Heathenism degrades woman to a position of slavery; Christianity elevates her to her rightful place—that of equality with man. It is with reference to social position and privileges that Paul says, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female, for ye are all one in Christ Jesus." (Gal. iii:28.) In Christ all occupy a position of equality as members of the family of God. Although equal in rank, in the social realm woman's powers are superior to man's. She is the center and charm of society; this is her recognized place and sphere, and here her powers shine most brilliantly.

Morally, woman is more susceptible than man. She can rise to greater heights of refinement and purity, and sink to lower depths of depravity and wickedness. Says Macaulay: "History proves that although woman, swayed by lofty impulses, approaches the angels, yet when yielding to a master passion, she is capable of a refinement of wickedness which men never attain." Woman can be a Sarah, a Hannah, an Elizabeth, or a Mary; she can also be a Delilah, a Jezebel, an Athaliah, or a Herodias.

Woman is naturally more religious than man, owing to the predominance of the emotional in her nature. This accounts, in part, for the fact that the majority of church members are women. Woman possesses the spirit of reverence, devotion and worship to a greater extent than man.

In matters of authority and government, woman is to be

in subjection to man. This does not imply inferiority of nature, but is necessary to order and good government. God said to Eve: "Thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee." (Gen. iii:16.) This does not teach that the rule of the husband should be arbitrary, unjust or tyrannical, but it does teach that it is the husband's province to rule, and the wife's to be in subjection. Abraham ruled righteously over his household, and his wife Sarah obeyed him, "calling him lord." The apostle Peter calls wives who are in subjection to their own husbands "Sarah's children."

Says Paul: "The head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is the man, and the head of Christ is God." Man "is the image and glory of God, but the woman is the glory of the man. For the man is not of the woman, but the woman of the man; neither was the man created for the woman, but the woman for the man; for this cause ought the woman to have a sign of authority on her head because of the angels. Howbeit neither is the woman without the man, nor the man without the woman in the Lord. For as the woman is of the man, so is the man also by the woman, but all things are of God." (I Cor. xi:3, 7, 12).

Paul says again: "Wives, be in subjection unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, being himself the Saviour of the body. But as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives also be to their husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself up for it." "Nevertheless, do ye also severally love each one his own wife even as himself, and let the wife see that she fear her husband." (Eph. v:22, 25, 33.)

Evidently these passages from the writings of Peter and Paul teach that the husband is superior in authority, and that the wife should be in subjection to her husband. The husband should love his wife even as himself, and the wife should reverence and obey her husband. This teaching is neither antiquated nor abrogated, as some would have it,

but is a part of the law of Christ, and will continue in force to the end of time. It is applicable to this age, and is as much needed now as it ever was in the history of mankind. When it is observed in the spirit, as well as the letter, by both parties, it produces model husbands and wives, and makes happy homes. In harmony with this teaching, Paul instructs Timothy "not to permit a woman to teach, nor to have dominion over a man, but to be in quietness." (I Tim. ii:12.) It is necessary to the peace, good order, and welfare of church and society that woman's subordination to man shall be regarded and maintained.

This brief consideration of the relation of the sexes presents to us this picture of woman: That woman is physically inferior to man, intellectually his equal, socially his superior, morally more susceptible, and religiously more devotional; and while she is man's companion and equal, in point of authority she is subordinate to him. Her place in society and her sphere of activity should be in harmony with the qualities and peculiarities of her nature, and her work and responsibilities should be such as she is best fitted to fulfill within her proper position and relations. This indicates that her place and sphere are to be found in domestic and social life.

The view just presented is in accord with that of leading scholars and writers on this subject. In commenting on the Mosaic account of the creation of woman, after speaking of the dual sense of the word *adam*, Charles Louis Loos says: "The words of Jehovah declare unmistakably that in the general compass of human life, in all human experiences, woman stands and works as the indispensable complementary associate of man, according to the ability granted to her. Kant well expresses this when he says, 'Only man and woman together form the full and entire man; one sex completes the other.' The Bible doctrine of this dual nature of the *adam*, and the exposition here given of it, do not necessarily involve the identity of the two parts—the man and the woman—nor their equality in nature and in their relations to each other and to human life."

Says John Ruskin, in "Sesame and Lilies:" "We are

foolish, and without excuse foolish, in speaking of the 'superiority' of one sex to the other, as if they could be compared in similar things. Each has what the other has not; each completes the other, and is completed by the other; they are in nothing alike, and the happiness and perfection of both depend on each asking and receiving from the other what the other only can give. Now their separate characters are briefly these: The man's power is active, progressive, defensive. He is eminently the doer, the creator, the discoverer, the defender. His intellect is for speculation and invention; his energy for adventure, for war, and for conquest, whenever war is just, wherever conquest necessary. But the woman's power is for rule, not for battle, and her intellect is not for invention or creation, but for sweet ordering, arrangement and decision."

Says Harriet Beecher Stowe: "I would have it felt by those who are seeking to elevate woman, that the work is to be done, not so much by creating for her new spheres of action, as by elevating her conceptions of that domestic vocation to which God and nature have assigned her. It is all very well to open to her avenues of profit and advancement in the great outer world; but after all, *to make and keep a home* is, and ever must be, a woman's first glory, her highest aim. No work of art can compare with a perfect home; the training and guiding of a family must be recognized as the highest work a woman can perform; and female education ought to be conducted with special reference to this.

"Now women have a sphere and profession of their own —a profession for which they are fitted by physical organization, by their own instincts, and to which they are directed by the pointed and manifest finger of God—and that sphere is *family life*."

The relation of the sexes is beautifully expressed by Longfellow in the following lines from the "Song of Hiawatha:"

"As unto the bow the cord is,
So unto the man is woman.
Though she bends him, she obeys him,
Though she draws him, yet she follows—
Useless each without the other."

The relation of the sexes, then, is that of companionship, in which each is the complement of the other; socially equal in rank, differing in powers and peculiarities, there are corresponding differences in activities and responsibilities. Equality in social position, or in intellectual ability, is not a warrant for identity in duties and activities. In this great busy world there is a division of labor according to the adaptation and qualifications of each class, and the same is true of the sexes. The relation of the sexes, and woman's proper position in society, must be duly considered in determining her sphere of work and responsibility. Distinctions based upon natural laws and conditions are as enduring as time, and cannot be ignored without destroying the very foundations of society. Woman's work and duties must be found in that which is appropriate to her sex, suited to her position in society, and consistent with her place as subordinate to man.

PART II.

II. What are the principles of the law of Christ which pertain to these offices which He has established in His church?

To answer properly this second question, the arrangements that Christ has made for the government of His kingdom or church must be kept in mind:

"And he gave some, to be apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, unto the work of ministering, unto the building up of the body of Christ." (Eph. iv: 11, 12.)

"And God hath set some, in the church; first, apostles; secondly, prophets; thirdly, teachers; then miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, divers kinds of tongues." (I Cor. xii:28.)

It has been shown that in the Kingdom of Christ the following order of officers is established:

(1.) Apostles of Christ.
(2.) Prophets.
(3.) Evangelists.
(4.) Pastors and teachers.

In the government of the church, then, Christ has placed

these four classes of officers, and to them are committed the government and management of His church and its interests. The first of these, the apostles of Christ, are, under Christ the Head, the master builders or architects, who superintend the erection of the spiritual house, the church of Christ. They furnish in the name of Christ the plans and specifications for the spiritual temple, and give directions to the workmen who are engaged in its construction. All things are to be done according to the instructions of these architects, the inspired apostles of Christ. Although dead, and therefore not personally with us, their authoritative instructions are found in their writings in the New Testament Scriptures.

The prophets, next in order to the apostles, were inspired teachers in the church during its infancy, while the volume of revelation was yet incomplete.

They were assistants of the apostles in the guidance and training of the infant church. When the church had become fully developed, and revelation had been completed by the writings of the apostles, the order of prophets, being no longer needed, was discontinued. This leaves in the government of the church two classes of officers—evangelists and pastors. These constitute the living, earthly representatives and official executors of the government of the church of Christ. Let us ascertain the functions of these two classes of officers.

(1.) *Evangelist.* Philip, Timothy, Titus and others were evangelists in the primitive church. Timothy was solemnly enjoined by the apostle Paul "to do the work of an evangelist." What is included in the office and work of an evangelist? Without attempting an exhaustive enumeration of duties, it will be sufficient to specify the more important. It is the duty of an evangelist to preach the Gospel and make Christians. This is signified by the meaning of the word *evangelist.* But this does not exhaust the duties of this office. It is the duty of an evangelist to gather together the disciples of a locality and organize a church. This involves instructing the members in their duties, in the nature of church organization, in the manner of procedure, in the qualifications

of church officers, and instructing the officers in the duties devolving upon them respectively. In short, the whole care, guidance and training of infant and weak churches devolve upon the evangelist. It is the duty of an evangelist "to set in order the things that are wanting" in the churches that are under his jurisdiction, and bring them up to the standard of fully organized and efficient working churches. In a word, the evangelist is the field-officer of the church, who occupies the outposts, and goes out into new fields and destitute regions, making conquests for the Master, caring for weak and struggling congregations, and developing them into efficient, well-organized and self-supporting churches. Clearly, the office and work of an evangelist are of great importance, imposing grave responsibility, and requiring the exercise of much authority in the administration of the affairs of Christ's Kingdom.

(2.) *Pastor.* Pastor or shepherd, presbyter or elder, bishop or overseer, are all applied in the New Testament to the same officer; in their scriptural use they all refer to the eldership of the church. To them is committed the oversight of the church, the management and control of its interests, and they are to exercise a shepherd's watch-care over the spiritual flock. The duties of a pastor or elder are included in two general classes, viz.: teaching and ruling.

(a) *Teaching.* The elders of a church are its official teachers. They are to feed the flock of God with the pure milk of the Word and the strong meat of Gospel truth. This work of teaching may be done publicly, in the meetings of the church, or privately, in house-to-house visitation among the members. It includes instruction, confutation, admonition and exhortation.

(b) *Ruling.* The elders of a church are its authorized rulers. Everything in the management and direction of the affairs of a church comes within their jurisdiction, and under their supervision. Christ, then, has established in the church two classes of permanent officers, to whom He has entrusted the direction and control of the interests of His kingdom on earth. The performance of the duties of these offices involves the exercise of important authority. The

evangelist is "to speak and exhort and reprove with all authority" (Tit. ii:15), and elders that rule well are to be counted worthy of double honor. (I Tim. v:17.) To these officers are assigned important duties in the work of the Gospel, involving grave responsibilities, and conferring high authority. The evangelist is a general officer, going from place to place as his work requires; the pastor or elder is a local and permanent officer, doing his work in the community in which he lives. Their work is largely, though not wholly, the same, the work of evangelist being more comprehensive than that of pastor. Both, however, are charged with the work of directing and promoting the interests of the Kingdom of Christ.

III. We are now prepared to consider and answer the main question under consideration in this address. *According to the scriptures, have women a right to be pastors and evangelists?* May women be chosen to fill these important official positions in the church? May they be made the official teachers and rulers of the congregation? May they be appointed to go forth in the world, preach the Gospel, baptise converts, organize churches, educate the members and officers in their duties, set in order the things that are wanting in the churches—in a word, do the work of an evangelist? As the question is a double one, each part will be separately considered and answered.

(1.) *May a woman be made a pastor, elder or bishop of a church?* Let us examine the qualifications of a pastor or bishop and see whether a woman possesses the requisite qualifications. "*The bishop must be without reproach.*" Many women there are who have this qualification. "*The bishop must be the husband of one wife.*" Does a woman possess this qualification? Can a woman be the husband of one wife? A man can have a wife and be the husband of one wife, but a woman cannot. Does the fact begin to dawn upon your minds that pastors, elders or bishops must be *men* and not women? Is it not evident that the pastorate or eldership is restricted to men? If there is any meaning in Paul's language, if he spoke by the Spirit of God, the question is settled. A woman is not eligible to the pastorate or

eldership of a church. By divine authority woman, on account of her sex, is debarred from being an official teacher and ruler in the church. The first and fundamental requisite for the eldership is that the person shall be a *man*. Not until the teaching of the Word of God is disregarded can a woman be made pastor of a church.

(2.) *May a woman be made an evangelist and do the work of an evangelist?* In answering this question your attention is invited to the following considerations:

(a) If a woman is not eligible to the eldership of the church, still less is she eligible to the office of evangelist, since, as we have seen, the latter office is more comprehensive and imposes greater responsibilities than the former. If, therefore, a woman is not permitted to be a pastor, still less is she permitted to be an evangelist.

(b) The Greek word *euaggelistees*, "evangelist," is masculine in gender. The feminine form, *euaggelistria*, "a female evangelist," is found in post-apostolic ecclesiastical literature, but it does not occur in the inspired writings. These facts restrict the office to men, and indicate that it is a departure from New Testament teaching for women to be evangelists.

(c) The evangelists of the New Testament period are all men. No woman filled the office of evangelist in the primitive church. There were "helpers in Christ Jesus," fellow-laborers with the apostles, both of men and women, but they were not evangelists. They did not fill the office or do the work of an evangelist. There are many kinds of workmen necessary in erecting a building, but they are not all of them architects, masons or carpenters. Some are painters, others plasterers, hod-carriers, teamsters, and helpers in other ways. So there are many workers in the church who are neither pastors nor evangelists. It is illogical to conclude that persons are evangelists because they labor in the Lord, unless it be shown that there is no other way of working in the Lord than by being an evangelist. Since, however, there are other ways of working, the conclusion that the fellow-workers whom Paul mentions are evangelists is wholly unwarranted. A candid and critical examination of the history of the primitive church necessitates the con-

clusion that there were no women evangelists in the days of the apostles.

(d) Preaching by women is a post-apostolic practice which exists chiefly among heretical and fanatical sects. The earliest account of preaching by women is in the beginning of the third century. In "Schaff-Herzog Encyclopædia," article "Preaching," the following statement is made: "Preaching by women was strongly forbidden in the Catholic Church, according to Paul's explicit direction, but was a feature with the heretics, and even with the Montanists, much to Tertullian's dislike."

In modern times, preaching by women is found in those sects which have erroneous views of the work of the Holy Spirit, as the Friends and Adventists, or which have defective views of the authority of the inspired writings, as the Unitarians. In one case, the practice is the result of fanatical delusion, the speakers professing to follow an inward illumination of the Spirit; in the other, it is the result of rationalistic presumption, the speakers boldly setting aside apostolic teaching by the dictates of their own reason. In neither case does the practice rest upon the teaching of the scriptures with reference to this subject. From all these considerations it necessarily follows that the scriptures do not authorize a woman to fill the office or do the work of an evangelist.

PART III.

Having seen that according to the scriptures women are not permitted to be pastors or evangelists, let us proceed a step further and inquire into the reason of this prohibition. If the scriptures gave no reason for it, we would still be compelled to accept the fact of prohibition and submit to it, walking, not by our own sight, but by faith in the superior wisdom of our divine Lord, by whose authority the prohibition was given. But since reasons are given in the scriptures for this prohibition, it is proper for us to ascertain what these reasons are for limiting woman's sphere of activity.

The reasons for these limitations are found in the following scriptures: "As in all the churches of the saints, let the women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permit-

ted unto them to speak; but let them be in subjection, as also saith the law. And if they would learn anything, let them ask their own husbands at home: for it is shameful for a woman to speak in the church." (I Cor. xiv:33–35.)

"Let a woman learn in quietness, with all subjection. But I permit not a woman to teach, nor to have dominion over a man, but to be in quietness; for Adam was first formed, then Eve; and Adam was not beguiled, but the woman being beguiled hath fallen into transgression." (I Tim. ii:11–14.)

Let us now carefully and candidly examine these passages, and ascertain what they teach upon the subject under consideration.

(1.) Paul does not permit a woman to teach or to speak in the churches. The church in Corinth had departed from the uniform usage in the primitive churches in permitting women to speak in the meetings of the church. In correcting this local disorder, Paul refers to principles of universal and perpetual obligation. The meaning of Paul's prohibition, in its permanent application, is to be determined by the general principles involved, and not by the disorder in Corinth. When Paul says, "It is shameful for a woman to speak in the church," he may refer to custom and prejudice of a temporary nature. But when he says, "Let them be in subjection, as also saith the law," he refers to something that is universally and perpetually binding. Paul's direction to Timothy, an evangelist, is not local or temporary, but general and permanent in its application. Paul's language in these two passages prohibits woman from being a public official teacher in the church. This much is certainly taught beyond question. While the language might be construed to mean more, it can not be understood to mean less, without explaining it away entirely. And in the light of what has already been considered, this appears to be the force of the apostle's language. Certainly the language cannot signify less than a prohibition of public instruction by women in the meetings of the church.

(2.) The reason for this prohibition is given: Women are commanded to be in subjection, and are not permitted to have dominion over men. Public instruction involves the exercise of authority, and in a mixed assembly, as in the

general meetings of the church, this authority will be exercised over both men and women. Hence, for women to teach in the meetings of the whole congregation would be to exercise authority over men. But such exercise of authority is inconsistent with woman's position of subordination to man. Paul says, "For it is not permitted unto them to speak; but let them be in subjection, as also saith the law." "But I permit not a woman to teach, nor to have dominion over a man, but to be in quietness." The law requiring woman to be in subjection to man was given in Eden, and has been in force during all dispensations. This law is for all ages and nations. Woman is forbidden to do that which is a violation of this divine law. But it is a violation of this divine law of God for a woman to be a public teacher in the church. Therefore, since women are to be in subjection and not to exercise authority over men, they are not permitted to be public teachers.

(3.) The apostle gives also the reasons for woman's subordination to man. These are two in number. The reasons are: (a) "For Adam was first formed, then Eve;" and (b) "Adam was not beguiled, but the woman being beguiled hath fallen into transgression." Woman was created after man, from man, and for man; this is the first reason for her subjection to man. Woman was first in the transgression, being beguiled by the tempter through the greater susceptibility of her nature. This is the second reason for her subordination. These reasons are both of them stubborn facts, not changeable customs; they will always remain just as they have been during all these centuries; they are unaffected by the lapse of time or change of manners and customs. But these facts are the reasons given by Paul for woman's subordination to man. Therefore, the law requiring woman to be in subjection to man will never be changed; it will continue in force while the world stands. But this law subjecting woman to man is the reason for prohibiting woman from teaching in the church. This prohibition, then, does not rest on changeable custom, but on the inherent nature of the sexes and their proper relations to each other. Therefore, the law of Christ which prohibits women from

being pastors or evangelists will remain in force as long as this world endures. This prohibition, based upon distinctions and relations which are inherent in the sexes, cannot be disregarded without violating a fundamental and universal law of God, which was given to regulate the relative position of the sexes.

The whole field of discussion having now been examined, the teaching of the scriptures upon this subject may be summed up, and embodied in the following proposition: *In the kingdom of Christ, women are prohibited from filling official positions of superiority and authority over men, and are required to be in subjection to the divinely appointed rulers of the church as "helpers in Christ Jesus."* God has placed in the church helps and governments. Women are permitted to be helpers, but are not permitted to be governors. They are hence prohibited from occupying those official positions which require the exercise of authority in the instruction and government of the church. It is for this reason that women are not included among apostles, evangelists or elders of the church. But within these limitations, and in subordination to the properly authorized rulers of the church, women may in many ways be "helpers in Christ Jesus," as were Priscilla, Phebe, Persis, Tryphena and Tryphosa in the time of the apostles. Subject to these limitations and the laws of expediency and love, women may do whatever they are capable of doing in Christian work the same as men. Within these limitations and under these laws, *a woman may do anything that a man may do who is not a pastor or evangelist.* The law of love requires that all things be done in peace and harmony, and to the edification of the church.

The law of expediency requires that propriety and adaptation be considered in the division of labor and assignment of work to different individuals, both male and female, and such arrangements made as will secure the best results for the cause of Christ. In obedience to these laws, women, as well as men, may sing, pray and talk in social meeting, teach in the Sunday-school, and work in temperance, benevolent and missionary societies. Women may be deaconesses in the church, and render valuable service in various kinds

of loving and helpful ministries. In work among the poor and neglected classes, among the degraded and outcast—especially of their own sex—in charitable work among the sick, suffering and dying in the hospitals, in zenana work and other ministrations in mission fields, there are activities where women can work more successfully than men. In these and other ways women may be "helpers in Christ Jesus," and promote the cause of Christ by the use of the powers with which God has endowed them. They should have as much liberty in this respect as the law of Christ authorizes or permits, but no more. Wherein the law of Christ leaves them free, let them not be restricted, but let them use their freedom for the good of humanity and the glory of God.

But let them not presume to partake of the forbidden fruit of official authority in teaching God's word and governing His church. Alas! too many men have made sad and disastrous failures in this matter. It will make matters still worse to disregard the Word of God and put women in the place of authority in the work of the church.

But the teaching of the scriptures on the subject of woman's preaching has now been fully considered. The subject is one of great moment, affecting important interests in the kingdom of Christ. A law of God of universal and perpetual obligation, and the authority of Christ, the divine Head of the Church, are involved in this question. Let there be no trifling or presumption in a matter of so grave importance. Nadab and Abihu were destroyed by fire for offering strange fire before the Lord, which He had not commanded them. Uzzah perished for violating a law of God. Fifty thousand and seventy men of Bethshemesh were smitten by God for presumptuously and irreverently looking into the ark of the Lord. Korah, Dathan, Abiram and all their company perished, and Uzziah was smitten with leprosy, because they transgressed the law of God in presuming to offer incense, a duty which pertained only to the priests, the sons of Aaron. Set aside the law of Christ upon this subject, and the authority of Christ is overthrown in everything; the very foundations of our holy religion are destroyed. Beware of laying unauthorized hands upon sacred things and divine commands.

In pleading for the Bible, and the Bible alone, and in advocating a return to primitive Christianity in faith and practice, as it is taught in the New Testament, it behooves to manifest a profound reverence for the teaching of God's Word, and unswerving loyalty to Christ, the sole and supreme Lawgiver in His kingdom. In demanding a rejection of human authority in matters of religion, the Word of God should not be made void by our own traditions. The *prohibitory* as well as the *preceptory* commands of the Word of God should be observed.

At this point a clear discrimination between principles, precedents and examples found in the New Testament will be of service, not only because of its bearing upon the subject of woman's work, but also because of its importance in the discussion of subsequent chapters on church polity.

Paul calls the law of Moses a yoke of bondage; James speaks of the law of Christ as the perfect law of liberty. The former consists largely of specific commands; the latter of general principles. The one has many ceremonies; the other has precedents and examples to illustrate and enforce divine teaching. To apply properly the principles, and follow correctly the precedents and examples, of the law of Christ requires a right understanding of the principles of interpretation, an intelligent and careful study of the scriptures, and a judicious and conscientious application of their teaching in practice. It is easier to execute explicit commands than general instructions; the latter require critical discernment and wise discretion in execution. The law of Moses made definite requirements of tithes and offerings; the law of Christ requires us to present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God, assuring us that, if there is a readiness to will, we are accepted according to ability. When the law demands a definite amount, as one-tenth, or a specified offering every day, or at stated times, it is easy to understand our duty, but when it is expressed in the general terms of "according to ability," and "as he may prosper," it requires intelligent judgment, conscientiously exercised, and faithful performance to do our whole duty. The great danger is that, owing to inadequate conception or defective

execution, we shall come far short of doing our duty as required by the law of Christ.

Sometimes divine law is embodied in approved precedent rather than express command. Something is done which receives divine sanction. In such case the divine approval has all the force of express command, and the approved action becomes a precedent to be followed as faithfully as commands should be obeyed. The authority for the observance of the first day of the week is of this nature. It rests upon approved precedent. On the same day that Jesus arose from the dead, the eleven assembled together, and Jesus met with them. On the next first day of the week Jesus met with His disciples. From that time the first day of the week has been observed as a day of rest and worship, being sanctioned at first by the presence of Jesus Himself, and afterward by the approval of His inspired apostles. Thus a divinely approved precedent has the same authority as an express command.

In some instances, the teaching of the law of Christ is contained in examples which illustrate principles of general application. These examples are similar in their use to examples in schools that are used by instructors to explain principles in the studies pursued. Suppose a teacher desires to explain the process of extracting the square root of a number. He takes an example, and goes through the process step by step, explaining each step as he proceeds. After the class has understood the example, the teacher unfolds the principles involved, which may be used in solving similar examples. Thus the pupils are led from the example up to the principle, and from the principle to the solution of other examples of the same kind. A similar method is employed in inculcating the principles of grammar, algebra, and other branches of knowledge. In like manner, the examples contained in the New Testament serve to illustrate and inculcate general principles, which can be applied to the varying phases of human action.

A good illustration of this is found in the thirteenth chapter of John. Jesus desired to teach His disciples an important lesson. They disputed among themselves as to which

should be considered the greatest. Jesus sought to inculcate humility, and He did it in a very impressive manner. He washed His disciples' feet. This was an act of hospitality—a custom that was observed among the Jews since the days of Abraham. On receiving their guests, it was customary to remove their sandals and wash their feet, thus removing the dust that had accumulated during the journey thither. This service was usually performed by a servant, and if performed by the host was indicative of his humility. After Jesus had washed the feet of His disciples, He said to them: "Know ye what I have done to you? Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well, for so I am. If I then, the Lord and the Master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye also should do as I have done to you." (Jno. xiii:12–15.)

Here, then, we have an example to inculcate a general principle. The general principle is expressed in these words: "Ye ought to wash one another's feet." The Saviour has here used the special language of His example to express the general principle. Putting the thought in general terms would give us this: "In humility ye ought to serve one another."

This general principle, deduced from this particular example of feet-washing, is applicable to all kinds of service, as well as the one illustrated by our Saviour's example. Jesus thus teaches the disciples the lesson that those are greatest who, in humility, render the greatest services. He then concludes the lesson with this grand truth: "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them."

Another instance of teaching principle by example is found in Paul's and Peter's directions concerning salutation. Almost from time immemorial the kiss was the common mode of salutation among relatives and friends as a token of affection. The directions of Paul and Peter did not institute this method of greeting. They simply regulated the existing custom in accordance with the law of love. They enjoin that the salutation of Christians shall be *holy*—that is, chaste and sincere, an expression of *real* affection, and not *feigned*,

or *treacherous*, as was the kiss of Judas. Paul says: "Let love be without hypocrisy;" so he says of the kiss, let it be holy, an expression of genuine love one for another. This principle of a true, holy salutation, that in the New Testament is applied to the kiss, is applicable to all salutations among Christians, whatever may be the mode.

Another illustration of inculcating general principles by a particular example is afforded by the case of women's speaking in the church in Corinth. Paul condemns this disorderly conduct on the part of these women, and, in correcting it, presents principles that apply to the case under consideration. Now while the disorder in the Corinthian church was local and temporary, the principles to which Paul refers in correcting it are not local or temporary; they are of universal and perpetual obligation, and apply to all cases that arise in the history of the church involving these principles. The particular examples may vary very much from time to time, but the principles are unchanging; like their Author, they are the same yesterday, to-day and forever. The principles involved in women's speaking in the church apply to "all the churches of the saints," and are for all time.

The case of the incestuous person in the Corinthian church is a further illustration of this method of teaching principles by example. Paul instructs the church in the course to be pursued in dealing with this wicked person. In doing so, he teaches the principles of church discipline which apply to all similar cases, and which are to be used at the present time in dealing with persons who are unworthy of the fellowship of the church.

These illustrations are sufficient to bring out the principle of interpretation which applies to instances of teaching principles by examples. That principle is this: *From a careful study of the particular example, ascertain the general principle inculcated; this general principle is of permanent obligation, and is applicable to all similar cases.*

This process of generalization and application of scripture teaching to conduct at the present time is of very frequent use in the study of the scriptures to obtain a knowl-

edge of our duty. Intelligently and judiciously exercised, it may be employed profitably in learning lessons from events and instances which occurred under previous dispensations; "for whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that through patience and through comfort of the scriptures we might have hope." (Rom. xv:4.) And it is almost constantly employed in applying the teaching of the law of Christ to the Christian life. Of course, care should be taken that there be correct generalization and right application of the examples given in scripture, and that evasion or perversion of Bible teaching be avoided. We should be honest, conscientious, and scrupulously accurate, "rightly dividing the word of truth." Thus we should study to show ourselves approved unto God; so shall we be workmen that need not be ashamed. We should seek to ascertain the exact meaning of the Holy Scriptures, and should accept whatever they teach, when rightly interpreted. Professor March has well said: "Truth is not conquered; it is read. It comes to earnest, humble seekers." All should be diligent seekers after the truth which God has revealed in His holy word. "Receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls. But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deluding your own selves."

CHAPTER VII.

The Rule of Discipline.

The value of the New Testament as a book of discipline is not duly appreciated in the churches of Christ. The famous declaration of Chillingworth, "*The Bible, the whole Bible, and nothing but the Bible* is the book for Protestants," is accepted in theory by all Protestant churches. It is denied in practice by those who adopt human creeds and books of discipline as authoritative, and bind them upon members as terms of fellowship. Those who accept it practically often fail in its application for want of a correct understanding of it. The two distinctive principles of Protestantism are as follows:

(1.) The Bible is the only rule of religious faith and practice, to the exclusion of all canons, decretals, traditions and philosophies.

(2.) Private judgment or interpretation is the right and duty of all.

The first of these cardinal principles affirms the all-and-alone sufficiency of the Word of God as a rule of faith and discipline. This frees Christians from all human authority in religion, and binds them by divine authority. It guarantees the fullest ecclesiastical liberty that can be enjoyed without repudiation of divine law and ordinances.

The second of these principles rescues men from the bondage of clerical interpretation, and fully recognizes man's personal responsibility to God. It does not concede any man's right to make special definitions of words to suit his preconceived notions, nor to frame rules of interpretation to torture meanings from passages in order to fit them to accepted theological theories or systems. It simply affirms the right of every man, without respect of persons, to candidly

use his God-given faculties in the study of the Word of God, in the light of the best lexicons, grammars, histories and other helps that are available to him, in order to a correct knowledge of the revealed will of God. That will, thus learned, is the supreme law of every individual conscience. The New Testament is the last will of God concerning men, revealed through Jesus, the Son of God. While this endorses the authenticity and divine credibility of the Old Testament, it makes the New the only law of the Christian institution. It abolishes Jewish rites and ceremonies that were "a shadow of good things to come," and embodies the enduring principles of God's moral government, that are the same in all the ages.

The New Testament is, first, a rule of faith. It contains the subject matter of faith, and its explicit statements furnish the limit of it. The following proposition states an invaluable boundary of religious obligation:

"Nothing ought to be inculcated upon Christians as articles of faith, nor required of them as terms of communion, but what is expressly taught and enjoined upon them in the Word of God. Nor ought anything to be admitted as of divine obligation in their church constitution and managements, but what is expressly enjoined by the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ and His apostles upon the New Testament church, either in express terms or by approved precedent."

In the second place, the New Testament is the rule of *practice*. The term practice covers three distinct fields of activity, viz.:

(1.) The deportment of members of the church.

(2.) The ordinances of the Gospel and acts of worship.

(3.) The discipline or government of the church.

Since the present purpose does not involve the consideration of the first two of these departments of practice, the word discipline is used as expressing the precise phase of practice under discussion.

The failure to understand, or to utilize, the apostles' teaching in this regard, and the many disorders resulting therefrom, have led some to seriously doubt its sufficiency to

meet all cases that arise in the administration of ecclesiastical affairs.

Serious difficulties impair the usefulness of congregations, and are allowed to drag along for years without any recognized method of solving and ending them. Dissensions and alienations have neutralized much of the best work done, and the immense waste of means and energy has retarded the natural growth of the best of all religious movements.

Churches go into a decline and ultimately die with consumption one of another, because of sheer ignorance of the New Testament as a rule of discipline or a culpable disregard of it. This question should be thoroughly re-examined in the light of experience and of the Word of God, that the churches everywhere may know the all-sufficiency of the inspired Scriptures, and how to use them to secure the ends of justice among Christians, and to promote the peaceful operation of local congregations and the harmonious co-operation of "sister churches."

A full discussion of the question under consideration includes three subordinate inquiries, viz.:

(1.) What is meant by the term discipline?

(2.) What instruction is contained in the New Testament concerning it?

(3.) Is this instruction sufficient to cover and rightly dispose of all cases of discipline that can arise in the administration of the church?

Discipline, though familiar in name, is neither well nor correctly understood. This is true not only of the large majority of private members, but also of many preachers and church officers.

Defective views are held as to what it means and involves, as to its obligations and necessity, as to its objects or purposes, and as to the manner and means of administering discipline. It is the purpose here to set forth a somewhat full and comprehensive view of the whole subject, considering its meaning, obligation, design, and manner and means of its administration. The subject is one of vital importance to the welfare and prosperity of churches, and to the success of the cause of Christ. The desire, purpose and delight of

every true Christian is to learn and to obey the commands of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The cadets in West Point military academy are (1) instructed in army tactics, and (2) drilled in the manual of arms, marching, and other exercises and evolutions pertaining to military life. In schools and colleges students acquire two things: (1) Information or knowledge; (2) Intellectual training or discipline. Here are two examples of discipline, one physical or military, the other mental or intellectual. In both we find that the ideas of *instruction* and *training* are included. The word also includes the idea of submission to wholesome rules and rightful authority, as when we speak of family discipline, school discipline, army discipline, etc. Webster defines discipline as follows: "1. The treatment suited to a disciple or learner; education; development of the faculties by instruction and exercise; training. 2. Training to act in accordance with established rules; accustoming to systematic and regular action; drill. 3. Subjection to rule; submissiveness to order and control; state of discipline. 4. Severe training, corrective of faults; instruction by means of misfortune, suffering, punishment, etc. 5. Correction; chastisement; punishment inflicted by way of correction and training. 6. (Eccl.) The enforcement of methods of correction against one guilty of ecclesiastical offenses; reformatory or penal action towards a church member."

From the above definitions it will be seen that the word discipline includes the ideas of instruction, education, training and correction; that even in its ecclesiastical sense it includes *reformatory* as well as *penal* action. The Greek word for discipline is *paideia*, from *paideuo* (from *pais*, a child), "to bring up, rear a child; to train and teach, educate; to chasten discipline." The noun *paideia* signifies the rearing or bringing up of a child; specially, its training and teaching, education; instruction; nurture, discipline, correction, chastisement. Thus the Greek word has about the same scope of meaning as the word discipline, its English equivalent. The Greek word occurs in Ephesians vi:4: "And ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath; but bring them up in the nurture (Rotherham, "discipline;" R.V.,

"chastening"), and admonition of the Lord." The noun *paideia* is found four times, and the verb *paideuo* three times in Hebrews xii:5–11. In the authorized and revised versions the verb is rendered "chasten," and the noun "chastening," "chastisement." Rotherham translates the verb and the noun by the word "discipline." His translation of Hebrews xii:4–11 is as follows: "Not yet unto blood resisted ye, against sin waging a contest; and ye have quite forgotten the exhortation which, indeed, with you, as with sons, reasons,

> 'My son, be not slighting the Lord's discipline,
> Neither be fainting when by Him thou art reproved;
> For whom the Lord loves He disciplines,
> But scourges every son whom He welcomes home.'

"In order to discipline are ye enduring; as to sons God to you is conducting Himself; for who is a son whom a father is not submitting to discipline? But, if ye are without discipline, in which all have become partners—by consequence, bastards and not sons are ye. Furthermore, indeed, the fathers of our flesh we used to have as administrators of discipline, and we used to pay deference; shall we not much rather submit to the Father of our spirits and live? For they indeed, for a few days, according to that which seemed good to them, were administering discipline; but He, unto that which is profitable; to the end of our partaking of His holiness. But no discipline for the present, indeed, seems to be of joy, but of sorrow; afterwards, however, peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who thereby have been well trained is it yielding."

In this passage the meaning of discipline is clearly brought out as involving the ideas of training and correction.

The Hebrew word *musar* expresses the same idea. It is from *yasar*, signifying to bind, to tame; hence to correct, chastise, punish, instruct, admonish; hence *musar* signifies "(1) *correction*, *chastisement*, (2) *learning*, *instruction*, as the result of discipline." The verb expresses the correction or punishment of children, rendered chasten in Proverbs xiii:24 and xix:18. It also expresses God's chastisement of the Israelites in the wilderness, in Deuteronomy viii:5. The noun is

used of the training or correction of children in Proverbs iii:11, 12; xxii:15; xxiii,13, and is rendered instruction in Proverbs i:2. It is also used to refer to the chastenings of Jehovah in Job v:17, and Psalms xciv:12.

From the definitions and citations which have been given, it is evident that the word discipline includes instruction, training, admonition and correction. Hence, church discipline properly includes the whole work of educating, training, admonishing and correcting the members of the church in "all things that pertain unto life and godliness," as well as the exclusion of members who are disorderly and refractory. Many persons think of discipline in the church as only the turning out of unworthy members. Now, while church discipline includes exclusion, *when that is necessary*, that is but a small part of the work involved, and that work is not to be done *until the other parts of the work have been performed.* The passages of scripture above cited show that discipline in the church involves such watch-care and training of the members as a parent should exercise over his children in "bringing them up in the discipline and admonition of the Lord," such training and chastening as God administers to His chosen people. The elders of the church, who are also *overseers* and *pastors*, are God's stewards over His house to care for, to watch over, and to train or discipline the members; and "they watch for their souls as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy and not with grief." This is what discipline means; and every minister or church officer upon whom devolves the care, training and management of a church should understand and realize the burden of responsibility that rests upon him in the discipline or training of the members in purity of life.

It is in this full and comprehensive sense that the subject will be considered and treated. There is needed a fuller and more accurate understanding of the subject in the fullness of its meaning and scope of its duties.

When offenses come, wise discipline first seeks to reform the offender by admonition, exhortation, reproof and rebuke. If these fail, it inflicts censure and penal action upon the offending member. In case of dispute as to the truth or

falsity of an alleged offense against Christian law, or as to the just application of the law to a particular case, there must be an authorized court for the fair and final settlement of the issue before penal action is taken. All this implies a proper authority in the church through which the body acts in the enforcement of the law of Christ upon members. Hence church discipline covers the whole field of congregational efficiency, which includes (*a*) Scripturally qualified officers; (*b*) Faithful discharge of official duty; (*c*) Courts established by the law of Christ for the determination of disputes; (*d*) Infliction of legally prescribed penalties.

Having thus indicated its different sections sufficiently for the present purpose, we inquire what is the rule or divine law relating to them?

The first thing that is enjoined by the rule of discipline is the selection and proving and approving of properly qualified officers and teachers, men of exemplary character, of good reputation, and of ability to perform the duties of their public positions.

The requisite qualifications of evangelists, bishops and deacons are explicitly given in Paul's epistles to Timothy and Titus, in the First Epistle of Peter, and in the history of Acts of Apostles.

These are all the public functionaries that are permanent in the church to be found in the New Testament. The requirements as to moral character are the same in all official members, for the obvious reason that the choice of a person to fill any public position is an endorsement by the church of his Christian character, and his influence and efficiency depend upon his good character.

The specifications are both positive and negative, and need not be transcribed here. Every one familiar with the Holy Scriptures can readily find and group them. The rule of discipline excludes from official position in the church all persons who have not these qualifications in fair degree. The choosing of men for elders, deacons or evangelists who are not what the New Testament says these officers *must be* in every particular, or who are, in any particular, what Paul or Peter says they *must not be*, is a repudiation of the New

Testament as a rule of discipline, in respect to the constituted authority of the church. In so doing the whole efficiency of the church is put in jeopardy.

It is sometimes urged that it is impossible to find men who have all these qualifications, and hence we must take the best we have. This is equivalent to saying that the New Testament is impracticable as a rule of discipline. Protestants cannot afford to make such an admission. It is to concede the necessity for some improvement upon the instructions of the Holy Spirit by a man-made book of discipline. This would be a surrender of the citadel. There is no such necessity. What a bishop or deacon must be in character, every Christian may be, and ought to be, and this rule excludes from these positions only such members of the church as have not attained in good degree to what they ought to be as followers of Christ. A company of disciples must therefore remain under the oversight and instruction of a competent evangelist until persons are trained for official duties who have the qualifications required by the rule of discipline.

The lamented O. A. Burgess said: "Perhaps one of the great, if not the greatest, hindrances to the cause of truth is that we have been trying to make Pauls and Peters out of unlettered, narrow-minded, money-loving men, under the pompous title of the eldership." A similar remark might be made concerning the diaconate, but it, being less prominent, has been less harmful through mistaken choice.

Disregard of New Testament teaching in the organization of local congregations is the tap root of most of the difficulties that have flourished like a green bay tree in the churches, and threatened their total destruction in many instances. A rigid application of the divine rule is the true remedy.

New Testament knowledge and New Testament religion are the potent remedies for all the evils that afflict our congregations. But in the absence of such religion, and in the disregard of such knowledge on the part of members as is sometimes evinced, what are the potent remedies for such evils?

Wise officers of the church, who invite the assistance of

other brethren of known experience and ability in difficult cases, and who quietly and wisely come to a conclusion, will seldom, if ever, fail to redress just grievances and settle all differences satisfactorily. But what if there be *unwise* officers, who refuse the aid of a foreign committee of such brethren, but thrust their hasty decisions upon the congregation without any fair opportunity for objection, explanation or examination of new facts? Or what if there be unreasonable men, who will not heed wise counsel and kind admonition?

If the New Testament furnishes no rule to meet such cases of unwisdom, headiness or factious opposition, and relieve the churches of their direful results, it is not a sufficient rule of discipline. It must provide a remedy for all cases that arise in the administration of the law of Christ, or it is insufficient. It must furnish the method of a just settlement of all differences and dissensions among brethren, or fail to meet the necessities of the church. Jesus said: "Offenses must needs come," and proclaims a "woe unto that man by whom the offense cometh." The fact of offenses calls for a rule of discipline to deal with them.

The New Testament is a sufficient rule of discipline for the churches of Christ. The right understanding and wise use of it is the supreme demand of the present time. When understood and rightly applied, all acts of discipline should be respected by churches, preachers and editors. There will then be no chronic troubles to impair the usefulness of churches, nor unworthy preachers be received into the pulpits. If such disorders continue to disgrace the grandest cause that has ever claimed the attention of men, it is not because the Lord has not furnished a potent remedy, but His people have failed to comprehend and rightly apply the divine rule in the government of the church. In the further development of this phase of church polity, it will appear that this rule of discipline provides for a prompt and just disposition of all cases that arise in ecclesiastical administration, whether public or private, official or unofficial, misdemeanors.

Whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the

same rule, let us mind the same thing, and if any be otherwise minded, let us hope that God will reveal even this unto them. (Phil. iii:15, 16.)

CHAPTER VIII.

Church Discipline.

I. Its obligation and necessity.

"The Christian congregation, like every other community, needs discipline for the sake of self-protection, in order to suppress or eliminate anything that might impair or destroy its life. But as the Christian congregation is a community of the faithful, the character of its discipline is purely spiritual." ("*Schaff-Herzog Encyc.*," *Art.* "*Discipline.*")

"The church, in common with all associations, if it has a right to exist at all, has an inherent right of self-protection against unreasonable and wicked men, who may seek to subvert its aims or destroy its peace. But there are not wanting very clear intimations in the New Testament of the right and duty of self-protection, and consequently of separation from injurious persons." (*Isaac Errett, in "Christian Quarterly" for January, 1873, Art.* "*Excommunication.*")

Society consists of individuals who are associated together by some common interest or for a common purpose. Where there is society, there must be government; where there is government, there must be law; where there is law, there must be penalty for its violation; when the law is violated, and the penalty incurred, the law must be enforced, and the penalty inflicted; otherwise, the law could not be enforced, the government could not be maintained, and society could not be protected. Non-enforcement of law results in anarchy, and anarchy is destructive of all order. This is true of all kinds of government, civil, parental, scholastical or ecclesiastical. What the administration of law is to society, what training is to the family, what school discipline is to a school, church discipline is to the church. Discipline is "the treatment suited to a disciple," and involves that in-

struction, training, admonition and correction that are necessary to the proper development of the powers and faculties of a disciple. Hence, church discipline is essential to the right development of disciples of Christ in Christian life and character. Church discipline is, therefore, necessary in order that the church may fulfill its mission among men. Without discipline in the church, confusion, disorder and anarchy hold sway, and the effect of preaching is greatly lessened—indeed, largely neutralized. Without discipline, the church fails to train its membership, and paralyzes its influence over the world.

The obligation to maintain discipline is fully taught in the scriptures. Notice what Paul says to Titus. (Tit. ii:11, 12.) The grace of God has appeared in the Gospel, and the result of its appearance is here said to be holy living, by denying ungodliness and worldly lusts and living soberly, righteously and godly. How is this done? The passage says it is done by "instructing us." This, however, does not express the full meaning of the original word. The Greek word is *paideuo*, "to bring up, rear a child; to train and teach, to educate, to discipline." The word is used in Acts xxii:3, where Paul is said to have been taught or "instructed according to the strict manner of the law of the fathers," *i. e.*, he was trained or educated in the Jewish religion. In the passage in Titus, Rotherham renders the word "putting us under discipline." This expresses the thought. The church is a school, divinely established for the moral training of its members, in order to develop pure and holy lives. This is done not merely by *instructing*, but by *disciplining* us. Thus, the grace of God in the Gospel "puts us under discipline."

Paul says to Timothy, "All scripture is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." (II Tim. iii:16.) Scripture is declared to be profitable for four things: (1.) Doctrine, *i. e.*, instruction. (2.) Reproof, or, more properly, conviction. (3.) Correction, and (4.) Instruction in righteousness.

It is evident that the fourth word here means more than "instruction," for that idea is expressed by the first word.

The fourth word in the Greek is *paideia*, which signifies *training or discipline*. Hence, the scriptures are profitable to instruct those who are ignorant, to convince those who are in error, to correct those who are wrong, and to discipline Christians in righteousness.

Jesus sent his apostles forth with the commission (Matt. xxviii:18–20) that includes the whole of their work, and the entire work of the church. It includes the work to be done for the world, and the work to be done for the church. The commission naturally divides itself into two parts: (1.) The work of making Christians, by making disciples, baptizing them into the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; and, (2.) The work of developing, educating, and training these Christians, by teaching them to observe all things that Christ commanded the apostles. The whole work of evangelization and Christianization is comprehended in the first part of the commission; and the whole work of teaching, educating and training Christians is comprehended in the second part of the commission. This second part is expressed in these words of Jesus: "Teaching them (the disciples) to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you." This involves two things: (1.) *Teaching* the disciples all that Christ commanded; and, (2.) *Teaching them to observe* all these commands. The latter is an immensely greater work than the former. It is an easy matter to teach Christ's commands; it is a far more difficult task *to teach people to observe them*. It is easy *to teach a child what to do*; it is much more difficult *to train a child to do it*. But the proper training of the child requires that it be taught obedience, even by punishment, if that be necessary. Now, as discipline is "the treatment suited to a disciple or learner," it is evident that the second part of the commission enjoins the whole work of discipline, the education and training of Christians in all things that pertain unto life and godliness. In harmony with this, Paul enjoins admonition of the disorderly, encouragement of the faint-hearted, support of the weak, long-suffering toward all, and, when the circumstances of the case render it necessary, exclusion from the church. (See I Thess. v:14; II Thess. iii:6; I Cor. v:3–13.) Paul

not only forbids retaining the incestuous person in the fellowship of the church at Corinth, but he forbids us to retain such a one in the fellowship of the church now, and enumerates several classes that he includes in this prohibition, as fornicators, covetous persons, idolaters, revilers, drunkards, and extortioners. (I Cor. v:9–11.) *When proper and wholesome discipline is exercised and maintained in the church all the time*, as it should be, exclusion from the church will rarely be necessary. Yet it is sometimes necessary; and when necessary, it should be done without shrinking from its responsibility, and becoming unfaithful to Christ. It is inconsistent to insist upon the law of admission in the second chapter of Acts, and disregard the law of exclusion in Corinthians and Thessalonians. One is announced and enjoined "in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ" just as much as the other. "For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is become guilty of all." *It is just as great a sin in the sight of God to be unfaithful to the law of discipline, as it is to be unfaithful to the law of admission into the church.* It is just as reprehensible to be unfaithful to the *second* part of the commission as the *first* part. We must "not shrink from declaring the *whole* counsel of God," if we would be "pure from the blood of all men."

II. ITS DESIGN.

The next point to be considered concerning discipline in the church is its design, or the objects to be accomplished by it. The object which one has in view in any work or enterprise will have an influence upon his whole effort for the attainment of his object. Just so the objects to be secured by church discipline should influence and control the whole work of discipline. Everything that is done should be done in harmony with, and with a view to, the purposes of discipline. What, then, are these purposes? The design of church discipline is to accomplish three important objects or purposes. These will now be considered.

(1.) The first object is *to maintain the honor and authority of Jesus Christ.* The apostolic commission rests upon the universal and supreme authority of the exalted and coronated

Messiah. *All* authority in heaven and earth is given unto Him. He commissioned His apostles to make disciples, and to "teach them to observe" all His commands. We have seen that this involves the entire work of training or discipline. These apostles, who are representatives of Christ's authority, enjoin upon us the law of Christ that requires us to use all reasonable and proper efforts to reclaim those who go astray; and if all these efforts, faithfully made, prove unavailing, to exclude the disorderly and refractory from the church. (I Thess. v:14; II Tim. iv:2; II Thess. iii:6; I Cor. v:5–13.) This work of discipline, from first to last, is laid upon the church by Christ Himself, the Founder and Head of the church; hence, the honor and authority of Jesus Christ are at stake in this matter. To maintain the honor and authority of Christ among men, *in the church and out of it*, is one of the objects of discipline.

(2.) The second object is *to preserve the purity of the church*. The church should be kept pure, not *absolutely*, for that is impossible in this world, but *relatively* or *comparatively* pure.

The parable of the drag net, and the character of the work to be done in the church, forbid absolute purity. Church members are not persons who are absolutely holy or sinless, but persons who are "following after holiness," or "the sanctification without which no man shall see the Lord." (Heb. xii:14.) In "perfecting holiness in the fear of God," members may vary in degrees of perfection, depending upon the progress which they have made in godliness. But the church has a right to demand that its members shall be *seeking after holiness*, and shall be "*striving to abstain from fleshly* lusts which war against the soul." (I Pet. ii:11.) They should be actuated and controlled by holy aims, purposes and principles. Persons who are not seeking after holiness, who are not *trying*, at least, to live worthy of the Gospel of Christ, have no business in the church. Their presence in the church is a menace to its peace and prosperity, and destructive to its purity. To prevent them from using their influence to ruin others, and to preserve the purity of the church, such persons, if found in the church,

must either be re-converted or excluded. Hence, we find such injunctions as the following: "Brethren, even if a man be overtaken in any trespass, ye who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of meekness; looking to thyself, lest thou also be tempted" (Gal. vi:1); and, "My brethren, if any among you do err from the truth, and one convert him, let him know that he who converted a sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall cover a multitude of sins." (Jas. v:19, 20.) If the efforts fail, the persons must be excluded from the church; else the church itself will become impure. Hence, Paul says concerning the exclusion of the incestuous persons and "such ones," "Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? Purge out the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened." (I Cor. v:6, 7.) Leaven is a symbol of corruption, or wickedness. As leaven, or yeast, works in the flour and imparts to each particle of the mass its own condition, so wicked or corrupt persons in the church bring those under their influence into the same state of wickedness with themselves. When the body is diseased, and gangrene commences, the member in which the gangrene is must be amputated, else the gangrene will spread and death ensue. So when there are those in the church whose "word will eat as doth a gangrene" (II Tim. ii:17, R. V.), they must be cut off from the church, otherwise their influence will spread through the church, and the death of the church will be the result. Therefore, discipline must be maintained in order to the health of the body of Christ, in order to preserve the purity of the church, so that it may be "a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish." (Eph. v:27.)

(3.) The third object of discipline is *to save the members of the church.*

"Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners." The salvation of men is the object of the entire work of the church. The work of evangelization is to save those who are outside of the church by bringing them to and into Christ; the work of discipline is to save those who are in the church by building them up in Christ. The whole work of training,

admonishing and correcting church members is done with a view to their salvation; because there is a future and eternal salvation which Christians are to work out "with fear and trembling." This work involves the instruction of the ignorant, the conviction of those in error, the correction of wrong-doers, the re-conversion and restoration of transgressors, and their discipline in righteousness, and, in cases of wicked and disorderly persons, their exclusion from the church. Even exclusion, when necessary, is *for the salvation of the transgressor.* Notice what Paul says of the exclusion of the wicked man in the church at Corinth. He commands the Corinthians "to deliver such a one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, *that the spirit may be saved* in the day of the Lord Jesus." (I Cor. v:5.) Hence, *even in the extreme measure of exclusion from the church, the object of discipline is the salvation, not only of the church, but of the transgressor himself.* To save the erring, to deter faithful Christians from erring, to reclaim the wayward, and restore them to the good and right way, to guard the flock, and to keep the sheep and lambs from straying, to "discipline" Christians in righteousness "to the extent that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, they should live soberly and righteously and godly in this present world," "having promise of the life which now is, and that which is to come,"—these are the purposes to be accomplished by the work of discipline in the church. To accomplish these, disciplinary measures are necessary, just as the administration of law is necessary to the welfare and protection of society, just as parental government and training are essential to the proper regulation of a family.

The design of church discipline, then, is to maintain the honor and authority of Christ, to preserve the purity of the church, and to save the members of the church by training them for the society of the pure and the blest, and for eternal life in the abodes which Christ is preparing in His Father's house. These are grand and important objects, worthy of our fervent prayers and earnest efforts for their accomplishment.

III. MANNER OF ADMINISTRATION.

Some one has truly said: "The manner of doing a thing has always a very large share in determining its effect." This is especially true of actions which exert an influence upon our fellow-men. Even animals are susceptible to the influence which proceeds from manner. The very same words spoken to a dog or a horse will attract or repel, according to the manner in which they are spoken. Just so the result ofthe work of discipline depends very much upon the manner in which it is conducted. Some suggestions are offered with reference to it. There is a right and wrong way to do everything, and it is important that discipline be exercised in the right way.

(1.) Discipline should be administered *in a manner calculated to accomplish the object in view.* In the case of a personal grievance (Matt. xviii:15,) the aggrieved party is to go privately to the wrong-doer to effect a reconciliation, or "to gain" the brother who has trespassed against him Now, whether he will succeed or not depends greatly upon the manner in which he approaches him. If he manifests a conciliatory spirit himself, he will be likely to succeed; if he evinces a haughty, vindictive spirit, he will certainly fail. To succeed in his endeavor, the person aggrieved should approach the transgressor in the spirit of kindness and conciliation.

When "a man is overtaken in any trespass," "spiritual" persons are to "restore such a one in the spirit of meekness." The object is to "restore" the brother who has trespassed, and the manner of the spiritual persons, their bearing toward the erring brother, should be such as will tend to effect his restoration. Also, in James v:19, 20, the object is "to save a soul from death." To do this, it is necessary "to convert the sinner from the error of his way." This is a case of an "inside sinner," of a brother who "errs from the truth." In order to save him, therefore, it is necessary to go to him, and talk with him in such a manner *as to "convert him."* Hence, the reconciliation, restoration and salvation of the erring one should constantly be kept in

view, and the manner of doing the work of discipline should be such as is calculated to accomplish these objects. Hasty and harsh measures should be avoided, because they are calculated to defeat these objects. "Let all things be done unto edifying," with a view "to edification and not to destruction;" with a view, "not to destroy men's lives, but to save them." (Luke ix:51–56).

(2.) Discipline should be exercised *in the spirit of kindness and love.* (See Rom. xiii:10; I Cor. xvi:14; Col. iii:12–14; Jno. xiii:34, 35; I Cor. xiii.) These and similar passages indicate the spirit and manner in which all disciplinary work should be conducted. Love is the universal law in the kingdom of Christ. We are nothing without love. Love is the greatest of the abiding forces in the church, because it crowns all, and controls everything. Where love reigns, there will be meekness, humility, compassion, forbearance and long-suffering; for "love vaunts not itself, suffers long and is kind." Hence, the spirit of kindness and love should prevail and control in all the administration of discipline.

(3.) Again, discipline should be administered *according to the law of Christ.* The order of procedure, the steps taken, should be in harmony with the principles and directions that are given in the New Testament with reference to this work. A failure in this respect will lead to awkward and unfortunate results. The directions given are given because they are proper, wise and right, and ought to be observed. In subsequent chapters some of these directions will be considered. The New Testament is our book of discipline, "and is profitable (a) for instruction, (b) for conviction, (c) for correction, (d) for discipline in righteousness." We do not need books of discipline other than the New Testament, but we do need to study the one we have that we "may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work;" and we need to *use* our book of discipline, and be guided by its directions, so making it, in deed and in truth, our rule of faith and practice.

(4.) Moreover, discipline should be maintained *with firmness and faithfulness.* No undue haste or severity should be manifested; neither should there be remissness and un-

faithfulness in the matter. "He that ruleth let him do it with diligence." (Rom. xii:8.) Due diligence should be exercised in all things that pertain to the welfare, watch-care and management of the church. The principles of right and truth should be kindly, tenderly and lovingly exercised; it should nevertheless be done firmly and faithfully.

(5.) Furthermore, discipline should be maintained *steadily and constantly*. Sometimes churches suffer wanderers to go astray without any special effort to reclaim them, wrongs to go unrebuked and uncorrected, disorderly conduct of various kinds to pass unheeded, and even grievous offenses against society and the law of God to go unpunished, and all this for a series of years, until the membership feel little, if any, restraint from following after their inclinations and propensities. After a long period of such remissness it is a doubly difficult matter "to set in order the things that are wanting," (marg. *left undone*,) and it is almost perilous to the church, and also to the preacher, to attempt to set things in order. It is difficult (a) because of the accumulation of cases of persons who are wayward and disorderly; (b) because of the disposition to remissness, which has been developed in the church by the long negligence. The whole church becomes leavened with the spirit of unfaithfulness and negligence. In such a state of affairs it is an exceedingly difficult, yea, an Herculean task, to put a church in efficient working order. Moreover, it is a task which requires years to accomplish successfully. The writer speaks from experience in this matter. Instead of this, there should be a uniform policy, steadily pursued, of caring for the flock and guarding the members from straying. Prevention is better than cure, and a wise and faithful oversight would prevent many of the evils that afflict a church through negligence. Far better it is to watch over the sheep, and especially the lambs of the flock, and keep them from straying, than to let them wander far away from the fold without attempting to bring them back. Far better is it to reclaim the wanderers *when they begin to stray*, than let them alone until all effort to reclaim them seems to be a thankless and hopeless undertaking. Hence, the work of discipline should be

regularly, steadily and constantly carried on, as cases arise and circumstances require, n order to a healthy and prosperous condition of the church. The work of training and purifying should be going on all the time, rather than leave it undone until reproach comes upon the church too great to be longer borne. What would be thought of a housekeeper who allowed the dirt and filth to accumulate in the house until it was not only a stench to the nostrils, but a source of disease to the inmates?

(6.) Finally, discipline should be *exercised with wisdom and discrimination*. A physician once handed a prescription to a druggist to be filled. The druggist asked how he wished the prescription to be mixed. "With brains," responded the physician. Many things necessary to be done in church management are left to the judgment of the eldership. Specific directions cannot be given. They must be guided by general principles, and know how to adapt and apply these to specific cases. Hence, the necessity for elders to be possessed of sound judgment, which is one of their qualifications. They are to be "sober" (R. V., "sober-minded"), *i. e.*, discreet, of sound judgment. Discipline should be wisely and judiciously exercised.

IV. MEANS OF ACCOMPLISHMENT.

Education is the development or unfolding of one's powers, like the unfolding of a bud into flower and fruit; it also includes the moderation of abnormal peculiarities, like the pruning of a vine to increase its fruitfulness. So Christian (church) discipline, or education, involves the unfolding and upbuilding of Christian character, and the curbing of improper tendencies and propensities, the denial of sinfulness and worldliness. Thus education, discipline, involves the work of *expression and repression, the work of promoting the right and restraining the wrong*. President Garfield once said:

"There are two classes of forces whose action and reaction determine the condition of a nation—the forces of repression and expression. The one acts from without, limits, curbs, restrains. The other acts from within, expands, enlarges,

propels. Constitutional forms, statutory limitations, conservative customs, belong to the first. The free play of individual life, opinion and action belongs to the second. If these forces be happily balanced, if there be a wise conservation and correlation of both, a nation may enjoy the double blessing of progress and permanence."

The language of this extract applies to church life equally as well as to national life. Two classes of forces are necessary to the complete development of character,—one centrifugal, the other centripetal; one of expression, the other of repression. To carry forward the work either of expression or of repression alone would develop, in education, a one-sided culture; in religion, a one-sided character. These forces should be "happily balanced;" there should be "a wise conservation and correlation of both" in order to a right and symmetrical development of character and life. The means of discipline, therefore, should include both the forces of expression and also those of repression. What these means are will now be considered.

What means of discipline will be required in any particular instance depends upon the nature and gravity of the offense. At this point an opportunity is afforded for the exercise of sound judgment, practical wisdom, and ripe experience. It will not do to deal with all classes alike, because offenses are not all of equal gravity, and are not equally injurious either to the transgressor or to the church. Proper discrimination should be made both as to the character of the offenses, and the means employed in correcting them. All the means of growth in grace and godliness, such as the worship of the church, the work of the Sunday-school, Christian benevolence and activity of every kind, are means of discipline, or training in Christian life. But, besides these general means of discipline, a few of the leading, more important, and also more specific, means will be mentioned.

(1.) *Public instruction and exhortation.* An important part of the work of the commission is the last part, which requires us to teach the disciples to observe all the commands of Christ. In fulfilling this commission, a minister must devote much time to instructing the church in the precepts

and principles of the law of Christ. Many of the sins committed are sins of ignorance, which cease to be committed when the members are rightly instructed. Hence, much pulpit effort is necessarily devoted to instructing members of the church in all Christian duties, and to exhorting them to "walk worthily of God, who called them into his own kingdom and glory."

(2.) *Private instruction and exhortation.* The apostles "taught publicly and from house to house." As opportunity offers, and circumstances require, the public teaching should be supplemented by private instruction, counsel and exhortation. This is an important and very efficient means of discipline, if wisely used. Frequently instruction and advice can be given in private interview more appropriately, with better effect, and more satisfactory results, than in public discourse. When the conduct and circumstances require it, this means of discipline should be employed.

(3.) *Private rebuke or admonition.* It is necessary sometimes to administer reproof, to rebuke as well as to exhort. We are taught to "admonish the disorderly." In many cases this admonition is best given privately. In mild or trivial offenses, to save the feelings of the guilty one, private admonition is preferable and most successful. It is not necessary or wise to parade every misdemeanor before the public gaze. Indeed, in some instances, such a course works real injury to the offender and to the cause of Christ. Proper regard for the feelings of the wayward, and for the interests of the cause of Christ, requires that in mild, or less serious cases, rebuke or admonition be privately administered.

(4.) *Public censure.* Sometimes, however, offenses are of so grave and injurious a nature, that the proper chastisement of the transgressor and the welfare of the church alike demand a public correction. Paul says, "Them that sin reprove in the sight of all, that the rest also may be in fear." (I Tim. v:20.) The connection in which this passage is found seems to refer this direction to reproving elders of the church. The same principle, however, applies to grave offenses committed by others, which seriously affect the peace,

harmony and prosperity of the church. To save the church from reproach, to rescue the transgressor, and to restrain others, gross violations of the law of Christ require a public censure.

(5.) *Social ostracism.* Paul teaches us to avoid those who cause divisions (Rom. xvi:17); to turn away from those who have a form of godliness, but deny its power (II Tim. iii:1–8); and to avoid factious persons after the second admonition. (Tit. iii:10.) Here are certain evil and troublesome characters that are to be avoided; they are to be put under social bans, and made to feel in this way the censure of the church upon their course, if, perchance, it may result in their reformation. If it fails, a further step may become necessary.

(6.) *Withdrawal of fellowship, or exclusion from the church.* The work of the church is to save sinners—*inside sinners* as well as *outside ones.* We are to seek to "gain" and "restore" the brother who has trespassed, to convert the brother who "errs from the truth." If we are successful in our efforts, we "save souls from death." And if we, in the spirit of Christ, faithfully use the means of discipline which have been previously considered, the result will be that in most cases, the erring brother will be gained, restored and saved. Occasionally, however, our efforts will prove unsuccessful. Sometimes a backslider is found who has so entirely made a shipwreck of his faith that all efforts to reclaim him are unavailing. When, therefore, all other means of saving the transgressor have been earnestly and faithfully tried without avail, and the transgressor remains incorrigible, disregarding the laws of Christ and despising His authority, there remains but one thing more to be done, there is no alternative; the law of Christ, the purity of the church, and the good of the transgressor alike demand his exclusion from the church. This is required both by II Thessalonians, iii:6, and by the teaching of chapter fifth of First Corinthians. In I Corinthians v, Paul teaches that the authority of Christ, the purity of the church, and the salvation of the sinner, all require that such wicked persons should be put out of the fellowship of the church. In such

cases, we cannot refuse to disfellowship the wicked persons without disloyalty to Christ. Let it be remembered, however, that this step is not enjoined, and is not to be taken, until all reasonable efforts for the restoration of the transgressor have been faithfully made and have failed. Then, as a last resort, as the only thing that remains to be tried, the law of Christ requires exclusion from the church.

These means of discipline, as cases arise and necessity requires, should be judiciously, lovingly and faithfully used. Perhaps it should be added, they should be *impartially* used. Says Paul to Timothy: "I charge thee in the sight of God and Christ Jesus and the elect angels, that thou observe these things without prejudice (marg. "preference"), doing nothing by partiality." (I Tim. v:21.) And James says: "The wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy." (Jas. iii:17.) Peace at the sacrifice of purity is purchased at too great a price; it cannot continue, and is pernicious in its effects. "Nothing is settled permanently until it is settled right;" and church officers, as far as possible, should so administer the affairs of the church that matters will be settled right in the first place and avoid more serious troubles afterward. While exercising their best judgment, they should act scrupulously and impartially in the administration of discipline.

V. TREATMENT OF OFFENSES.

"The object of church discipline is to prevent scandal, with a further view to retrieving the offender himself; and the only means which can be employed for this purpose is, properly speaking, exclusion, partial or total, from the community."

"Church discipline, though ever so necessary for the self-protection of the church, has its last and highest aim in the reconciliation of the offender; and in the spirit of love it must dictate its punishments." ("Schaff-Herzog Encyclopædia," Art. "Discipline.")

These are wholesome words. Well would it be if the sentiment of the above were always followed in the work of

discipline! But while we may imperfectly judge as to what is best to be done at times, yet it will not do to hesitate and delay, *and finally do nothing at all.* It will not do to cloak, palliate or wink at sin in the church. A church cannot prosper that does this. Says Solomon, "He that covereth his transgressions shall not prosper; but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall obtain mercy." (Prov. xxviii:13.) This is true of a church as well as of an individual. The law of Moses says: "Thou shalt surely rebuke thy neighbor, and not bear sin because of him." (Lev. xix:17.) That is, if we do not reprove the sin of those who are associated with us, we bear sin ourselves. To the same effect are some expressions in the New Testament, such as the following: "Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them." (Eph. v:11.) "Lay hands hastily on no man, neither be partaker of other men's sins; keep thyself pure." (I Tim. v:22.) It is necessary that the church shall free itself of responsibility when its members transgress. Not until sins are repented of, confessed and redressed, is the mantle of charity—which "covers a multitude of sins"—to be thrown over them.

Offenses are divided into two classes:

(1.) Personal or private offenses.

(2.) General or public offenses.

The first includes sins or wrongs committed against individuals; the second includes sins against the church, and against the peace, good order and welfare of society. The distinction has reference more to the character of the offenses than to the manner of their treatment.

The scriptures which relate specially to the treatment of personal offenses are the following:

"If therefore thou art offering thy gift at the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift." (Matt. v:23, 24.)

"And if thy brother sin against thee, go show him his fault between thee and him alone; if he hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he hear thee not, take with thee

one or two more, that at the mouth of two witnesses or three, every word may be established. And if he refuse to hear them, tell it unto the church; and if he refuse to hear the church also, let him be unto thee as the Gentile and the publican." (Matt. xviii:15–17.)

"Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother sin, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him. And if he sin against thee seven times in a day, and seven times turn again to thee, saying, I repent, thou shalt forgive him." (Luke xvii:3, 4. See also Matthew xviii:21–35.) These scriptures enjoin certain duties upon the *wrong-doer and the wrong-sufferer.*

(1.) *The wrong-doer.* In the first passage above quoted, Jesus makes it the duty of the wrong-doer to be reconciled to his brother. He must not be "angry with his brother." (See Matt. v:22, where "without a cause" is omitted in the Revised Version.) And Jesus makes reconciliation *the first duty* of the wrong-doer. If he is engaged in the worship of God, and remembers that he has wronged his brother, he is to go *at once* to his brother and be reconciled to him. Then he can return and worship God acceptably. In the spirit of reconciliation he is to go, and he is to do his part toward effecting a reconciliation with the brother that he has wronged, in order that his worship may be acceptable to God. "For he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, cannot love God, whom he hath not seen." (I John v:20.)

(2.) *The wrong-sufferer.* The other two passages above quoted point out the duty of the one who is wronged. He is to take steps to bring the wrong-doer to repentance, and if he succeeds he is to forgive him. He is thus to "gain his brother." The steps to be taken are:

First. To go alone to his brother and convince him of the wrong that he has done; if he succeeds in "gaining his brother," there the trouble ends.

Second. If the first step fails, then he is to go a second time, taking with him one or two other persons. The object again is to "gain the brother," or, if unsuccessful, to

have these persons as witnesses to the fact of failure to obtain a settlement of the difficulty.

Third. If the second effort fails, then the person who is wronged is to present the case to the church, with the evidence of the persons who accompanied him. If this effects repentance and reconciliation, the case ends. But "if he refuse to hear the church also," the case ends so far as the injured party is concerned. It now becomes a sin against the church, and is, therefore, a public offense, to be treated by the church in the same way as other public offenses.

It should be carefully noted that if our Saviour's instructions in Matthew v:22, 23 and xviii:15–17 were carried out, *the wrong-doer and the wronged would meet half-way.* This is the way it should be. When the spirit of conciliation is found on *both sides* of a personal disagreement, there is little difficulty in effecting a settlement. It is only when one side manifests an unchristian spirit, and refuses to be guided by the law of Christ, that there is any serious difficulty in reconciling parties at variance.

The same principles that are involved in the treatment of personal offenses apply also to the management of public offenses. This is evident from Galatians vi:1; James v:19, 20; I Thessalonians v:14, and II Timothy ii:24–26. A violation of the law of Christ is a sin against Christ; and as the church with her officers is the visible representative of Christ's authority, violations of Christ's laws are sins against the church. It is the duty of the church, then, as the injured party, to proceed with the wrong-doer as directed in Matthew xviii:15–17, and to follow the steps and directions there given in the treatment of transgressors.

This view is fully authorized upon general principles, and also by the relation which elders of the church, *as shepherds*, sustain to the flock over which they preside. It receives additional support, however, if we adopt a various reading of Matthew xviii:15, and Luke xvii:3. According to some manuscripts, the phrase "against thee" is wanting in these passages. The three oldest manuscripts,—namely, the Sinaitic, the Vatican, and the Alexandrine,—all omit "against thee" in Luke xvii:3, and it is omitted in the Re-

vised Version. The Sinaitic and the Vatican manuscripts both omit this phrase in Matthew xviii:15. The Alexandrine manuscript fails to testify concerning this passage, inasmuch as the first twenty-four chapters of Matthew are wanting in this manuscript. As it omits the phrase in Luke xvii-3, it very likely would omit it also in Matthew, if this part of the text should be found. If, then, the phrase "against thee" is spurious, the instructions in Matthew xviii:15–17, and Luke xvii:3, are general, and apply to *public* as well as to *personal* offenses.

It is the duty of the church, then, in public offenses, under the direction and management of the elders, to go to the erring and endeavor to restore them after the manner indicated in Matthew xviii:15–17. The elders are not *to do all of this work*, but to *superintend it*, and do what they can of it. Those "who are spiritual" are to assist the officers in this work. Any member of the church who can do something, whose influence and efforts would be helpful, should render all the aid in his power. Oftentimes some private member will have more influence over a wayward one than the minister or any of the officers of the church. In that case, that private member is the one to go, and the one the officers should send, rather than send one of their own number. The elders should wisely direct the work, and the members should cheerfully and heartily co-operate with them in trying to save transgressors in the church. A sinner in the church has no more hope of salvation than one outside, unless he repents and receives forgiveness. Moreover, it is just as much our duty to try to save *inside* sinners as *outside* ones. There is just as much joy in the presence of the angels of God over the returning wanderer who has strayed from the fold, as over the prodigal who returns to the Father's house from the paths of sin. The work of the church is to save sinners, the erring within, as well as the lost without. Let the church, under the direction of its officers, with the co-operation of the members, endeavor to fulfill her mission in the world to the glory of God and the salvation of men.

VI. CAUSES OF NEGLECT.

In this chapter I desire to say some things with reference to the causes of neglect in matters of discipline. In doing so, I shall not undertake to say how general or prevalent these causes are, or what ones operate in any given region or locality, but simply note such as have come under my observation in the past few years, leaving each reader to determine in how far these causes exist and operate in his own church.

Having revised several church records in four different States, and knowing something of the general condition of the churches in several States, I think my induction of cases is sufficiently numerous and extended to warrant the statement that in most of the churches there is a large per cent. of merely nominal membership, probably one-fourth to one-third of the entire list of names on the church record. In some churches it will not, perhaps, reach twenty-five per cent., but in others it will come nearer to fifty per cent. of the membership. This nominal membership constitutes the chief hindrance to the prosperity of the church and the success of the Gospel. They are for the most part, *dead-heads*, and also *dead-weights*, "having a name to live, but are dead." The only sign of life that they ever exhibit is to oppose and hinder the church in its effort to maintain the authority of Christ, and to preserve the purity of the church. From such a disciple may the Lord deliver us! "They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him." (Tit. i:16.) "They have a form of godliness, but deny its power." (II Tim. iii:5.) This state of affairs is the result of a neglect of proper discipline in the church. The causes of this neglect will now be considered.

(1.) *Incompetency of the eldership.* By the term eldership, I mean those who have the oversight or management of the affairs of the church, including the elders, and also the ministers who have charge of the church. I shall not discuss the preacher's relation to the church farther than to say that a preacher who is located with a church, and doing the work (perhaps I ought to say occupying the position) of

a pastor, is practically an elder of the church, whatever may be his relation, technically considered. *The work of a pastor is the work of an elder, for pastor and elder are simply two names for the same church officer.*

It is not often that men can be found in a congregation who are competent and fully qualified for the office of overseer of a church. This office is described by three words: *Elder*, because the person should have age, experience and wisdom; *Overseer*, because they are to superintend the affairs of a church; and *Pastor*, because they are to be shepherds to the flock, to take care of the sheep and lambs. Suitable men for this work are difficult to find. As a result, frequently unsuitable persons are chosen to the eldership, who are incompetent to do the work properly, and the work is either neglected, or improperly done, which is just as unfortunate for the church.

Again, sometimes the preacher of the church is a young man, who, though a good and worthy preacher, lacks that age and experience which will give him wisdom to do his work right. There seems to be a great demand for young preachers. Whether this is because the churches cannot support older men with sufficient salary, or they think that young men will please the people better, especially the young people, and draw larger audiences, I do not undertake to say; these, or perhaps other reasons, may have some influence in the selection of preachers. But it is unfortunate for a church to have a preacher too young to direct properly the necessary work of discipline. And it is doubly unfortunate if a church, besides having such a preacher, has not elders properly qualified to superintend this work. Right here we find one of the chief causes of neglect in church discipline. We ought to have a department in our colleges, or a class in our Bible Colleges, to educate and qualify men—preachers and others—for the eldership. And in training and preparing young men for the ministry, more attention should be given to instructing them in the *administrative* work of the church. They should be trained to be *pastors* as well as *evangelists.*

(2.) *Unfaithfulness of the eldership.* Sometimes elders

are found who shrink from the duties and responsibilities which their position imposes upon them. They are willing enough to have the *office* of elder, and the *honor*, whatever that may be, but are unwilling to do the *work* of the office. "If a man seeketh the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work." If he does not desire the *work*, he should not seek the *office*. I do not think that this class of persons is numerous in the church, yet they are sometimes found in the eldership.

Occasionally, also, preachers are found who aspire to the position of pastor (which is the same as elder), and yet shrink from the duties and work of discipline which that position places upon them. They are disposed to put this work upon the other elders. "Their business," they say, "is to *preach the Gospel*; it is the business of the elders to attend to discipline." And so they refuse to have anything to do with discipline in the church. The consequence of this is easily seen. If the preacher, who is the leader in the work of the church, does not look after matters of discipline, the other elders will not be likely to attend to it, and it is generally neglected, greatly to the injury of the church. It is to be hoped that preachers of this class are few in number, and yet I have known preachers of some prominence who are reported to be of this kind. Let preachers not shrink from doing their whole duty as stewards over the house of God.

(3.) *Unfaithfulness of churches to the work of discipline.* Sometimes there has been for years so much negligence and slackness in regard to discipline in the church, that the nominal membership, already mentioned, constitutes a considerable part, perhaps the controlling part, of the church. In that case, the work of discipline is rendered exceedingly difficult, and yet it is none the less necessary. In such a case, the eldership, if faithful, are entitled to profound sympathy, and especially the preacher, for if he does his duty he is very likely to be sacrificed as a peace-offering to the worldly element in the church. It is quite rare for this element to predominate in a church, but there is enough of it in

most of the churches to embarrass seriously the work of discipline.

(4.) Another cause of neglect is *the frequent change of preachers*. It has already been remarked that this work is not likely to be done unless the preacher *takes the lead*, and at least *directs the work*. This, however, he cannot well do until he is acquainted with the church, and this requires the principal part of a year's residence and labor with a church. Again, it is hardly to be expected that a preacher will do much of this work if he is shortly to leave and go to another field. Hence, frequent changes of preachers in a measure disqualify them for this work, and prevent them from attending to it as they should, and probably otherwise would, do. Changing preachers is a more serious matter, both to church and preacher, than many persons imagine.

(5.) *Eagerness to secure additions* on the part of the church or the preacher, or both, is another cause of neglect of discipline. It is feared that if discipline is faithfully exercised, it will keep persons from joining the church. It is true that there will be *fewer* additions, but the additions will be *better* ones. They will more than make up in *quality* what they lack in *quantity*, and this will be vastly better for the church. The veteran and venerable T. W. Caskey wrote several years ago: "I have been preaching in this State two months and a-half this trip—have not added many to the churches; I have not labored much in that direction. I find there has been too much exhortation, too little teaching, in the churches; too much of the emotional, not enough of the mental; too much effort at proselyting, not enough training; too much effort at getting, not enough at keeping. I have therefore directed my poor efforts to the development of the grand truths of our holy religion and the teaching of the churches. The evils with which our churches are afflicted, and especially in Texas, I presume will continue as long as the greatness of preachers is measured by the numbers added to the churches, and as long as churches seek that class alone to hold their protracted meetings." The state of affairs described in the above extract is unfortunately

not restricted to either the time or the place at which it was written.

The "Baptist Union" some years since published the following concerning revivals: "We are profoundly convinced that if the churches would institute protracted meetings for their own spiritual good, and prosecute them thoroughly, a new era of Christian power would dawn upon us. The success of the meetings should be measured by results in the churches, rather than by immediate conversions; it should be the aim and desire not so much to make more Christians, as better ones; not to add to the members of the churches, but to their graces—their faith, love, holiness and spiritual power." These extracts, both of them, contain much truth worthy of careful reflection.

It may be said also, that the *neglect of discipline* keeps people from joining the church. This is certainly true to a considerable extent; and a pity it is that it is true. It is necessary that the line of demarkation between the church and the world be maintained and clearly marked. If the church does not guard and preserve this line, who will? Nothing pleases Satan more than to have the church come down to the level of the world, and have all distinctions between them obliterated. If the church suffers this to be done, who is to blame? Surely not the world!

Let the church fulfill her mission of saving sinners, preserve her purity, and maintain the authority of Christ. Let discipline be regularly, lovingly and faithfully exercised, remembering that no "discipline for the present, indeed, seems to be of joy, but of sorrow; afterwards, however, peaceful fruit of righteousness, to those who thereby have been well trained, is it yielding." In the restoration of primitive Christianity, we must do *the whole work* of the commission, *the second part* as well as *the first*; otherwise, it will be necessary for another religious movement to be inaugurated to reform the "Current Reformation."

VII. OBJECTIONS.

Having seen that discipline is "the treatment suited to a disciple," and that the law of Christ enjoins the obligation

of maintaining discipline in the church, we come now to consider some objections that are made against it. It is not intended to exhaust the list of objections, but to notice the more important ones.

(1.) When church discipline is mentioned, the objection is frequently heard, "It will never do to enforce discipline; it will ruin the church." In reply to this, it may be said that if this is true the church is already ruined, and the sooner it is put out of the way of Gospel success the better. But I apprehend that this objection is rather a revelation of the objector's ignorance. This objection is evidently founded upon ignorance of what church discipline signifies and involves. As defined in the first chapter, it is necessary to the salvation not only of the members, but of the church itself, and many churches are sadly weakened and almost ruined for the want of it. All the churches need proper and wholesome discipline, and cannot prosper without it.

(2.) Again, when the work of discipline is suggested, the objection is sometimes urged, "If you maintain discipline, the people will join other churches," *i. e.*, denominations. It will be observed that this objection does not deny that the law of Christ enjoins and requires discipline; it simply objects to having the law of Christ executed in this particular, *lest the people join some other church.* I have no doubt that this idea has done much to prevent its administration in the churches. Rightful and needful discipline has been neglected, and wayward members have been suffered to pursue their downward course unrebuked, *for fear of losing them*, or for *fear that certain others would not join the church, but go to some other church.* In this we see one of the sad and ruinous evils of divisions among professed Christians. But it should be said in reply to this objection that any person who would leave the church, or refuse to join it, on account of the proper exercise of needed discipline, would be an injury to the church if he were in it. The church is better off without such persons, and you are simply deluding them by retaining or receiving them through a false and unwarranted clemency. Besides, this matter is not within our discretion. It is simply a question of loyalty or disloyalty to

Christ. Shall we object to the enforcement of the law of Christ? Shall we seriously consider whether Christ's authority shall be respected, and His commands obeyed, or not? Such an objection comes not from a faithful, loyal, loving heart.

(3.) It is sometimes objected that discipline will make trouble in the church and in families. Well, as we find the world, there is trouble in it now, and there is likely to be trouble in the future. No person can go through this world without trouble of some kind. And if you try to avoid trouble by neglecting your duty, you will be involved in greater trouble, either in this world or in the world to come. It is true that discipline should be rightfully and judiciously exercised; but this objection furnishes no reason why it should be abandoned altogether, for that would only increase the trouble tenfold.

(4.) The stereotyped objection, however, to discipline in the church is that the parable of the tares is opposed to it. The answer to this objection is twofold.

(a) This objection is based upon a misconception of the teaching of the parable. The lesson of the parable is not that there should be no discipline in the church, but that in human society (the world), the righteous and the wicked are to dwell together until the end of the world, and that the godly are not to persecute the ungodly, but leave them to Him who hath said, "Vengeance belongeth unto me. I will recompense." The parable of the tares forbids the persecution and enjoins the toleration of the wicked by Christians in this world. The parable has no direct reference to the question of church discipline. Several years ago, in answer to the query, "Does the parable of the tares refer to those in the church walking disorderly, or to worldings?" Isaac Errett wrote as follows:

"To the children of the wicked one, whether in the church or out of it. The field is the world. All the children of the wicked are in the world, so are the children of the kingdom. The parable was not intended to teach that the wicked were not to be cast out of the church, but that they were not to be cast out of the world. The righteous and the

wicked are to be allowed to grow together *in the field of the world* until God's judgment sits; and Christians are not allowed to root them out."

J. W. McGarvey, in his "Commentary on Matthew," takes the same view. He says: "It is true that gathering out the tares at the end of the world *implies* that they will be allowed to grow until that time, but it implies nothing at all as to whether such of them as can be shall be excluded from the church."

Lange, in his notes on this parable, says: "From this passage we learn that according to the ordinance of the Lord, the Old Testament punishment denounced upon false prophets and blasphemers does not apply to the new economy. It is contrary to the mind and will of Christ to pronounce a ban, in the sense of denouncing final judgment upon men by removing them and their errors from the church. This toleration must not, however, be regarded as implying that evil and sin are to escape all punishment in the church; it only implies that we are to remember and strictly to observe the distinction between the sowing and the reaping time. But within the limits here indicated, it is our duty to correct all current mistakes (Jas v:19), to refute every error and heresy (I Tim. iv:1–6), and either to remove from the church anti-Christian doctrine and practical offenses, with all who are chargeable therewith, or else to induce such persons to leave the church, by refusing to own and acknowledge them." (Matt. xviii:15; I Cor. v:2; Jno. v:10.)

In a foot-note, after correcting another error, Philip Schaff says, "On the other hand, however, this passage must not be abused and misunderstood, so as to sanction the Erastian latitudinarianism and to undermine discipline, which is elsewhere solemnly enjoined by Christ and the apostles, and is indispensable for the spiritual prosperity of the church." Even those who take a different view of the parable from the one above given admit that it does not forbid the exercise of proper discipline in the church. Archbishop Trench is probably the most distinguished of this class in our day. Concerning this parable he says: "But, assuredly, when Christ asserts that it is His purpose to make

a complete and solemn separation at the end, He implicitly forbids,—not the exercise in the mean time of a godly discipline; not, where that has become necessary, absolute exclusion from church fellowship; but any attempts to anticipate the final irrevocable separation, of which He has reserved the execution to Himself." ("Notes on the Parables," p. 84.)

Robert Milligan, formerly President of the College of the Bible in Kentucky University, also held the same view as Archbishop Trench. And yet he speaks in unmistakable language of "the duty of the church to withdraw her fellowship from every member who persists in a disorderly course of conduct." (See the "Scheme of Redemption," pp. 529–532.)

From these citations it is evident that it is an egregious and mischievous error to suppose that the parable of the tares prohibits rightful and necessary discipline in the church.

(b) In further answer to this objection, it may be said that if Jesus in the parable of the tares forbids discipline in the church, then His own teaching contradicts the teaching of His inspired apostles. Not only so, but His teaching in this parable conflicts with His commission to the apostles, which, in the last part, enjoins discipline. Paul certainly did not understand that Christ in this parable or elsewhere prohibited church discipline, or he would not have enjoined it in his letters to the churches. In his farewell words to the elders of the church at Ephesus, in his letters to the Thessalonians, Galatians, Colossians, Corinthians, Timothy and Titus, there are numerous references to the work of discipline. Peter, James and John also refer to it in their letters. And when cases arise in which faithful discipline requires exclusion, or withdrawal of fellowship, Paul expressly commands it "in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." In other words, Paul simply represents Christ, and it is Christ's own authority that requires this to be done. The apostles are commissioned to teach disciples all the commands of Christ. We learn, then, from these apostles what Christ has commanded; these apostles have enjoined discipline even to the exclusion of wicked and disorderly persons from the church. It follows, therefore, that Christ has

commanded that such discipline should be exercised. There is nothing, then, in the parables or any other teaching of our Divine Lord that conflicts with the teaching of His inspired apostles; otherwise Christ would contradict Himself. Far safer is it to follow the authoritative declaration of our Saviour's commands which His chosen apostles have given us, than to "make the Word of God of none effect" by our erroneous interpretations. There is, then, no teaching in the Word of God that is opposed to wholesome and necessary discipline in the church. Discipline should be exercised with wisdom, love, forbearance and long-suffering; but, nevertheless, *it should be exercised*, and kindly, but firmly and faithfully, administered.

CHAPTER IX.

The Rights of the Congregation.

The history of Puritanism is the account of a heroic struggle against "the superincumbent weight of an intolerable hierarchy" that crushed the liberties of primitive Christians. Romanism is a strong ecclesiasticism, which destroys all individualism in religion. Congregationalism exalts the individual to a degree that often destroys ecclesiastical efficiency. In the former, the centripetal forces are all-controlling. In the latter, the centrifugal forces constantly tend toward disintegration. The true and scriptural polity holds these opposing forces in harmonious equipoise, so as to afford the largest opportunity for individual growth without danger of reducing the body of believers to a religious rabble. An eminent thinker once said: "Congregationalism is good enough where church members are all saints, but it is not sufficient for the mixture of the good and the unsanctified that compose the church memberships in this world."

At bottom the question strikes the source of official power in the church. There are, in fact, but two views on this point. Episcopacy—Greek, Roman and Anglican—assumes that official authority arose at the beginning of the church on earth and flows down the centuries through a conduit of unbroken official succession, that is distinct from and above the congregations. Congregational and presbyterial polity assumes that official rights spring from the local congregations acting in their associate capacity under the instructions of the ever-living Head of the church, given through inspired apostles. Congregationalism is pure democracy in the local church, and recognizes no other authority. Presbyterial government is a representative democracy, and recognizes the right of the whole body to control each part in accord-

ance with the revealed law of Christ. Calvin took the position that every church is a separate and independent body, invested with the power of legislation for itself. Both must recognize congregational rights, or logically drift into high episcopacy. A careful examination of the rights of congregations is fundamental in both forms of church polity. Methodist episcopacy is presbyterial in principle.

A local church of Christ is a company of believers in Jesus, the Christ, and the only begotten Son of God, who have covenanted together to meet in a given place for public worship on the Lord's Day, and at other times agreed upon, and to be governed in all things by the law of Christ.

Their congregational rights are based upon the equal birthrights of the individual members. All are upon the same plane of privilege, and enjoy a common fellowship. There is neither male nor female; all are one in Christ Jesus. The universal priesthood of believers is clearly taught in the New Testament, and was accepted by the religious reformation of the sixteenth century. This principle involves the right of every disciple of our Lord to participate, in an orderly way, in all congregational acts, whether of worship or business.

Speaking of Robert Browne, who in 1580 organized the first Congregational church since the days of the apostles, Dr. H. M. Dexter, in his "Hand-book of Congregationalism," says: "He believed that all church power resides in Christ, its rightful, absolute monarch. Democracy was not a thought of his time, and he was no democrat. Yet as he held that Christ reveals His will to, and by, each of His faithful ones,—ruling through each equally as His vicegerent—in point of practical working his absolute monarchy became indistinguishable from a pure democracy. The people governed as vicegerents of Christ; yet the people governed. A mutual covenant was the fundamental basis on which all rested. * * * Every such local church, self-complete and, under Christ, self-governed, was bound in equal sisterhood to every other church. It should give to and receive from them not only sympathy but help, as need might require. Such sympathy and help, on occasion, should mani-

fest themselves in councils or synods for deciding or redressing of matters which cannot well be otherwise taken up."

Dr. Dexter formulates eleven propositions (page 4), which, he says, "are the fundamental principles of Congregationalism," and generalizes them in two germ elements of what he calls the polity of the New Testament, as follows:

"(1.) The independent self-completeness—often known as the *autonomy*—under Christ, of the local church.

"(2.) The equal sisterhood—which might in like manner be known as the *adelphity*—under Christ, of all such local churches." (Page 67.)

These are the germinal principles of church polity, and are held in common by presbyterial bodies—all who derive official rights from congregational action under the law of Christ. The members of such a local church have the right of choosing all necessary officers possessing the scriptural qualifications, and of deposing them, if they become disqualified for any reason, and of transacting all the appropriate business of a Christian church.

There are some things that are not appropriate to bring before a congregation for its action. Such are matters of faith, piety and morality. These are subjects for public instruction, and all are alike bound by the law of Christ, which they have accepted as governing such matters. But discretionary matters may appropriately be referred to the congregation that has a right to decide upon them. Such questions of expediency can be rightly settled only by the concentrated wisdom of the church, whose enlightened judgment, fairly expressed in any practical manner, becomes the law to govern the body in such matters. There is a great variety of such questions that arise in the progress of any live church. Among these questions are: The hours of worship; the place of assembly; the building of a house, and the control of it; the calling of a pastor; the election of officers or committees; the use of helps in the praise service, as a praise-book and other aids in promoting the best attainable singing in the congregation; the methods of accomplishing what the Gospel requires to be done, without prescribing the manner of doing

it; and particularly anything that calls for an outlay of money for which members are expected to contribute. As bishops must be "not self-willed," nor "lords over God's heritage," they must respect the rights of the congregation in all such prudential arrangements. The will of the church duly declared concerning all these matters where Christ has left men free, is the law to rulers and members alike, to which all are required to submit as unto the Lord. "Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God." (Eph. v:21.)

"Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble." (I Pet. v: 5.)

It may be a question whether members of the church who have not reached their majority in age are entitled to a voice in public affairs. Where there is no civil statute that determines the qualifications of voters, it will seldom happen that any harm will come from the widest range of suffrage. On this point of order as it respects voting in the church, it will be of interest to quote the mature judgment of one of the clearest thinkers and writers of the present century. A. Campbell, in his famous essay on "Order," published in 1835, says:

"A question arises of some consequence—nay, of great consequence: On what occasions and for what purposes are Christians authorized to vote?

"They are not to vote on questions of faith, piety or morality. Truth is not to be settled by a vote, nor is any divine institution respecting the worship or morality of the Christian church to be decided by a majority. These are matters of revelation, of divine authority, and to be regulated by a "Thus saith the Lord," and not by a *thus saith the majority*. But in all matters not of faith, piety or morality, in all matters of expediency, there is no other way of deciding but by a vote of the brotherhood.

"There is no revelation that A, B or C shall be chosen elders or deacons; that D, E or F shall be sent on any special message; that the church shall meet in any given place at any given hour; or that this or that measure is to be adopted

in reference to any particular duty arising out of the internal or external relations of the church. Such matters are to be decided by the vote of the whole membership, or not at all.

* * * * * * *

"A matter of greater importance occurs. Must the church be always unanimous before it acts upon any question of fact or expediency? While it is possible to be of one faith and of one hope, however desirable it may be, it is not to be expected that a congregation will always be of one mind in all questions of expediency which may occur in our earthly pilgrimage. * * * * * *

"It is sometimes inexpedient for the majority to carry all in its power. There may be occasions when it is better for the majority to waive its privileges than to carry its point. * *

"The only question, then, is, whether it is most expedient and comely that the minority submit to the majority, or the majority to the minority; for one of them must yield. Unanimity very generally gives to the smallest minority the absolute control of the whole congregation. There can be no debate. The minority will, in the spirit of love and in the spirit of Christian modesty, agree to submit to a clear and decided majority." ("Millennial Harbinger," 1835, pp. 511 to 513.)

This is the only method of just recognition and exercise of congregational rights. And it should be noted that no question of conscience can arise in these matters of discretion that are within the field of congregational action. Conscience always respects principle or Christian law, and never enters the field of things expedient. The man who pleads conscience in this department mistakes stubbornness for conscientiousness. By his weak conscience he seeks to rule the whole church, and the weaker the conscience the more tyrannical the rule.

The leaders will have due care to see that all questions for congregational deliberation and decision are brought before the church at a proper time, in due form, and upon due notice. They will see that the subject in hand is clearly understood, and may endeavor to enlighten the members on the subject so they may act intelligently. They should not allow un-

fairness, electioneering, or any unworthy methods to be used, and should have due regard to the voice of age and experience. In this way, and by the exercise of a Christian spirit, the majority vote will become practically unanimous, and the combined wisdom of the whole church will be in the ascendancy. Thus the apostles recognized the rights of the congregation in choosing its servants (Acts vi:1-6), in sending missionaries (Acts xi:22, xiii:1-3 and xiv:26, 27), and in choosing messengers to act for the church on occasion. (II Cor. viii:16-19, 23.)

In general, the rights of the congregation embrace everything that is not found in the express requirements, or contrary to the plain prohibition, of the word of God. All things that are lawful for men to do, *i. e.*, that are morally right and will tend to edification, a congregation has a right to do under the supreme control of the law of love. Any infringement of this right of the local church is a violation of the law of Christ's kingdom that leads to division and to other evils. A slight deviation from the right line at this point may produce a wide schism in its divergent progress. Such is the sad history of sectism and its bitter fruits. The endeavor "to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" demands faithful adherence to the will of the Lord so far as He has revealed His will, and the fullest maintenance of congregational rights in all things in which Christ has left men free.

The weakness of Congregationalism is found in the following proposition of Dr. H. M. Dexter: "Every such local body of covenanted believers is independent of any outward jurisdiction or control—whether from assumed vicegerents of Christ, or from other churches in any associate or individual capacity—being amenable directly and only to their great common Head." (Page 65.)

Each individual is as "amenable directly and only to the great common Head" as is "every such local church," and with equal propriety may claim to be "independent of any outward jurisdiction or control"—"whether from assumed vicegerents of Christ," or from a church "in any associate or individual capacity." Hence this "fundamental principle" destroys the one body of Christ, carves up the kingdom

of God into numerous local democracies, which in turn crumble into their individual constituents. This is ecclesiastical anarchy. Every congregation is independent of all others, and every member is a law unto himself.

All that has saved Congregationalism from this result of its theory is the repudiation of this principle in its practice. The fellowship of the sisterhood of equal churches is held to "require that the advice and countenance of other churches be sought and gained by means of an ecclesiastical council, in ordinary cases of demand for it; such as when a church begins its organic life; when a pastor is to be settled or dismissed; and in extraordinary cases, when some trouble with which, unassisted, it feels itself incompetent to deal is perplexing a church."

Yet "the result of such a council is not in the nature of a judicial decision, but is simply friendly advice—having so much force as there may be force in the reason of it." This is about equivalent to saying that such a council will be useful where the young or troubled church acknowledges its weakness or incompetency and seeks advice that it gladly accepts. But in cases where no such weakness or incompetency is felt or conceded, such a council will be regarded as an impertinent interference. These are the very cases where its *advice* is most needed, but where it will be spurned.

In these instances congregational practice repudiates its theory. Dr. Dexter adds: "Yet should a church unreasonably refuse to follow advice thus tendered, and so be led into scandal, sister churches may purify their own fellowship, and bear testimony against disorder and sin, by suspending with regard to it their sisterly relation until the wrong be rectified."

This is unquestionably a correct and wholesome proceeding, but it is a clear abandonment of the theory of independency. It is an assertion of jurisdiction over the offending sister church by the ecclesiastical council, an acceptance of its findings as "a judicial decision"—a decision as to the unreasonableness of the refusal and the infliction of the extremest sentence that any ecclesiastical body can inflict, viz.: the suspension of sisterly relations.

All this is entirely scriptural, as will be shown in subsequent chapters, but it is not consistent with congregational polity. The strongest episcopal or presbyterial government can do no more.

But if a church calls a council and refers its troubles to it, as stated in the letter missive, it thereby obligates itself to accept the finding and advice. A refusal to do so is a breach of faith and of good fellowship. A congregation that unreasonably refuses to call a council in cases of scandal that involve the good name of sister churches, or that has damaged the relation of one or more of its members to other churches, thereby forfeits its rights; and sister churches have a right to decide upon the character of its refusal, and to hold the unreasonable church to proper accountability for the damage to the body with which it claims affiliation. The method of procedure in such cases is the distinguishing feature of presbyterial church polity. Under strictly congregational polity there is no means of redress in such cases. The New Testament must provide a remedy for them, or it is not a sufficient rule of discipline, and the church must supply the deficiency.

The limit of the rights of the congregation is well defined by President R. Milligan in his "Scheme of Redemption." He says: "In all purely local matters, such as pertain to their own order and discipline, the local congregations are independent of each other; and should ordinarily be allowed to manage their own affairs, according to the word of God, in whatever way they may think best.

"But in all matters of general interest, such as pertain to the increase, order, power, glory and efficiency of the whole body, these several congregations may and should co-operate, whenever by so doing they can better accomplish any of the great and benevolent objects for which the church was established on earth." (Page 407.)

Extraordinary instances, in which there is the right of interference to exercise a restraining power over a single congregation, are described by the same eminent author in the following paragraph: "Whenever," he says, "any one of them is in danger of being corrupted or destroyed by false

teaching, maladministration, or any thing else, it is the imperative duty of other churches to interfere, in a prudent way, for its safety. This is plainly and positively required by the mutual relations that they all sustain to each other as members of the body of Christ." (Page 519.)

The oneness of the body of which Christ is the supreme Head is directly opposed to the absolute independency of the distinct congregations, and involves their interdependence, because of their common union with their acknowledged Head.

When Jesus said "upon this rock I will build my church," He did not mean a local church. The church of Christ is "the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood." It is the one holy catholic church, founded upon the rock of Peter's confession: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." This one church is distributed into the local assemblies of disciples of Christ in the cities, provinces, states and countries throughout the world.

A. Campbell once said tersely and truly: "No community called a church is absolutely independent of *the* church of God, but amenable to the whole church for its administration of its affairs."

This accords with the apostolic presentation of the unity of the body of Christ, and enunciates a principle which points out the true remedy for the abuse of congregational rights. While it leaves local churches entirely free under the law of Christ's kingdom, it declares the accountability of congregations to the general body when, in disregard of that law, they bring dishonor upon sister churches and scandalize the cause of Christ.

The method by which they may be held to just accountability is a matter of great practical importance.

CHAPTER X.

Appeals.

The right of prayer is not more natural, nor necessary, nor expedient, than the right of appeal. Prayer is an appeal for help in time of need, and when a member of any community is aggrieved by any public action concerning himself, he has an inherent right to appeal to the proper source of help in his time of need. There is no government, or state, or family that can subsist without it. It is a part of every religious institution before the Christian, and if it be no part of it, it is a perfect anomaly in all social institutions.. Who would commit his moral destiny and ecclesiastical standing to any particular community to whose decisions, however partial, self-willed, unjust and informal, he must forever submit? No intelligent, fair-minded man will consent to such a surrender of his natural right, even to save a theory of church polity. If the New Testament does not recognize and secure the exercise of this right, it does not meet the just demands of discipline, and is not a sufficient rule for the government of the church of the living God. The principles underlying the true polity of the Christian Church are clearly taught in the New Testament, and may be formulated in the following five propositions:

(1.) The kingdom of Christ, sometimes called His church, is one great community, composed of all the particular communities and individual persons that have acknowledged and received Jesus of Nazareth as the Son and Messiah of God, as the only Head, King, Lawgiver and Arbiter of angels and men.

(2.) All the particular congregations that compose this great congregation, this general assembly, called the kingdom of God, the holy nation, are responsible to one another

and to the Lord as much as the individual members of any one of them are to one another and to the Lord.

(3.) Congregations are under certain obligations and owe certain duties to one another, the faithful discharge of which is indispensable to that free and cordial communion and co-operation essential to the holiness of the church and the triumph of the Gospel in the world.

(4.) Among these obligations and duties are the maintenance of the doctrine and discipline of Christ's kingdom, and a due regard for all the acts and decisions of one another.

(5.) When, then, any particular congregation offends against the constitution of the Messiah's kingdom by denying the doctrine, by neglecting the discipline, or by maladministration of the affairs of Christ's church, essentially affecting the well-being of individual members or other congregations, then said church is to be judged by the eldership of other churches, or by some other tribunal than her own, as an accused or delinquent member of a particular congregation is to be tried by the constituted eldership of his own congregation.

The first four of these propositions may be regarded as indisputably plain and settled. If any one of them be denied, let it be placed in negative form, and the error of such denial will be strikingly apparent. For example take the third. Negatively, it will be thus: "Congregations are under no obligations and owe no duties to one another; therefore nothing can mar that free and cordial communion and co-operation essential to the holiness of the church and the triumph of the Gospel in the world." This is extreme independency, which is destructive of Christian unity and produces instant paralysis of all co-operative energies.

Testing the fifth proposition in the same manner, it reads as follows: "When any congregation offends against the constitution of Messiah's kingdom by denying the doctrine, by neglecting the discipline, or by maladministering the affairs of Christ's church, essentially affecting the well-being of individual members or other congregations, then said church is not to be judged by any tribunal on earth, but to be held in as high esteem as before."

This is the logical result of extreme Congregationalism, but from its naked absurdity Congregationalists instantly recoil. They do not so learn Christ. They abandon their theory at this point, and, in effect, say, Let such an offending congregation alone and fellowship not her acts. But that is to judge and condemn her without the form of a trial. It is religious anarchy. It is ecclesiastical lynch law. Every instinct of justice cries out against such summary procedure. Such a congregation must be tried. The only question is, By what tribunal shall she be tried? By every man's opinion, or by a properly constituted tribunal? Invincible necessity has decreed that there is no other alternative. If by the former, there is an end of law and order in Christ's kingdom; the church becomes an unlawful assembly—a mere rabble. If by the latter, the New Testament must provide a lawful tribunal to justly dispose of such cases. Every church that departs from the faith or from the discipline of Christ's kingdom, or that unrighteously and unwisely administers its affairs, to the detriment of individual members, a particular congregation, or the whole church of Christ, must be tried by such a tribunal, and its decision must be respected by the body at large, or endless strifes and schisms, with their train of bitter fruits, is the inevitable result. Anyone that pushes his notions of congregational independency so far as to deny the necessity for such a trial of an erring church, and such a settlement of the questions involved, is deluded by a word, or misled by a false theory of church polity, as much as he who makes his little borough, city or county so independent as to deny the supervision and jurisdiction of the nation, kingdom or state to which he belongs.

Churches have more or less cherished the idea of various and different tribunals before which to decide cases of discipline and of questionable doctrine. Hence they have church courts from the session to the general assembly, from a class-meeting to a general conference. Congregationalists know no higher tribunal than a single congregation, and they often make the whole congregation of men, women and children judges of each and every case that happens or question that arises in the community.

The words church and state often mean their institutions. To appeal to the state means to appeal to its tribunals. The requirement as to two or more witnesses and telling it to the church implies an ecclesiastical court and a trial of the issues joined. "Tell it to the church" does not mean to proclaim the grievances to the public assembly on the Lord's Day, or at any other time, nor to peddle them among the members privately. This would scandalize the church and outrage every principle of justice. It can only mean to bring the charge and specifications, in proper form, to the knowledge of the recognized tribunal of the congregation, and await a hearing.

The New Testament recognizes three tribunals. They are:

(1.) The eldership of a local church. (Acts xiv:23; xx: 28; I Tim. v:17; Heb. xiii:7, 17.)

(2.) Wise men able to judge between brethren. (I Cor. vi:5.)

(3.) The elders of sister churches. (Acts xv:1-6.)

The second of these tribunals rests upon the *consent* of the parties at variance for its authorization. It is simply the principle of arbitration, recognized in civil and international affairs, applied to ecclesiastical differences. It is a mutually honorable, and eminently Christian, method of settling disputations. But the nonconcurrence of either nullifies a court of arbitration. The consent of the parties to such a court binds both to abide the award without appeal, unless this right is specifically reserved.

The eldership of the local congregation, if not involved in the issues pending, have primary jurisdiction over all its members. Any member accused before the elders of the church may ask for a committee of arbitration for sufficient reasons, and fair-minded elders will grant the request, join in the selection of the committee, and thus end the case speedily.

Or, an accused member has the right of appeal, upon specific and valid exceptions noted, from the decision of a local eldership to the eldership of another church, or the eldership of other churches, who may review the case fin-

ally by their representatives. The simplest principles of justice laid down in the New Testament require this right of appeal. So the New Testament makes ample provision for the prompt settlement of all difficulties and the full protection of all members against arbitrary decisions and injustice, so far as this can be done under human administration.

All governments, civil and ecclesiastical, must have tribunals constituted by law, whose authority is derived from the lawmaker. To allow offenders to nullify such tribunals by a refusal to be tried, is to overthrow the government; it is anarchy.

The right of appeal in church government includes both the right of a person or persons, dissatisfied with the final action of the court of primary jurisdiction, upon specific legal exceptions taken to the proceedings, to have the whole case reviewed by another eldership, either alone or with other elderships acting jointly, who are removed from local excitements and prejudices; and also the reference of a matter of dispute and difficulty by mutual consent to representatives of other congregations for a hearing and final adjudication. In either case of an appeal from a decision rendered, or a reference at any stage of the proceeding to a tribunal that constructively may be regarded as fairly expressing the impartial judgment of the general body, there is a final settlement, which the parties immediately concerned and all sister churches are bound to respect. There is no warrant in scripture nor in justice for additional appeals, that only prolong difficulties, without reasonable excuse. The first and second of the tribunals named will hardly be called in question by any intelligent student of the New Testament. But the third one named demands a more careful examination to fully vindicate its legal claim of divine authority.

It might be vindicated on the sole ground of the broad principle of justice declared by Paul in his Philippian letter. (Phil. iv:8, 9.) Such a tribunal is certainly a thing that is honorable, just, and of good report, and, furthermore, has the sanction of Paul's example and his express command to do those things which have been learned, received, heard and

seen in him. The principle of reference of matters of dissension and disputation in one church to the elders of another church or churches is clearly embodied in an approved precedent reported in Luke's history of the primitive church. (Acts xv.) This is an inspired sanction of such an eldership or elderships as the authorized court to consider and to determine the question at issue. Not to accept this principle, or to acknowledge such a tribunal of appeal or reference, is to make the commandment of God of none effect and to reject the divine law of discipline.

But this precedent must be examined more critically. Let the reader carefully read the full report of the case in Acts, fifteenth chapter. This portion of canonical scripture, though much misquoted, misapplied and abused, is designed to develop the Christian institution, both in its matter and form, and is necessary to the perfection of the Christian records. We must ascertain not only its literal meaning, but its abiding utility and proper application.

The case is as follows: Certain believing Pharisees of Judea had gone down to Antioch in Syria, the first Gentile church in the world, and had endeavored to corrupt the simplicity of the Gospel by introducing certain dogmas of their own. These attempts having been resisted, a discussion and controversy arose. Meantime Paul and Barnabas returned from their tour, and, finding these difficulties in the church, undertook their correction, but failed in giving full satisfaction to the whole church. Whereupon, the church, no doubt by and with the consent of the Apostle Paul and Barnabas, agreed to refer the matter to some other tribunal. They chose Jerusalem, probably for two reasons. First, because the Judaizers pretended to have authority from that place; and secondly, because that church had a very intelligent presbytery, and the apostles might be expected to take part in the adjustment of the matter. They appealed then to the officers of that community. The reference or appeal being agreed upon, the church of Antioch elected a deputation, determining to send other delegates besides Paul and Barnabas. They went to Jerusalem and were received by the whole estate of the elders, apostles and church. But it

is recorded that "the apostles and elders came together to consider this matter." They were the judges in the case. There was much disputing probably between the apostles and elders, the judges and those Judaizers. After this discussion by those of one side, Peter, then Paul, then Barnabas, then James, addressed the council. Paul and Barnabas, being delegates, were not judges in the case. They simply testified to what God had wrought by them among the Gentiles. Peter and James presented the argument, and the latter gave his sentence or judgment to the entire tribunal, by which it was unanimously adopted.

It is plainly stated that "the apostles and elders came together to consider this matter." They were competent to the task and asked no helps. The church could add no authority to the apostles and elders. As the question affected their feelings as Jews and their conduct toward the Gentiles, they showed their submission to the judges by concurring in the decision and in the mission of the persons sent to convey it to Antioch. But the cardinal question is, In what capacity did the apostles participate in these proceedings? Was it as apostles, or simply as judges? Not as apostles, for in that character they could receive no help from elders or brethren. As apostles, they were under plenary inspiration, and needed no reasoning or debating on the subject. They gave judgment just as the elders did, without any special revelation or supernatural light upon the subject. Their decision, it is said, was acceptable to the Holy Spirit, *i. e.*, concurred with the Holy Scriptures quoted, explained, and applied to the case in hand. These apostles and elders acted upon this appeal from Antioch as men should act now in a similar case, by the exercise of their enlightened judgment upon the points referred, and upon the sacred scriptures that bear upon them. The legitimate inferences are: That the case was referred to the apostles and elders, as bishops or overseers of the flock of Christ; that they came together to deliberate upon the subject, and reached a conclusion so rational and consistent, that it exactly agreed with the words of inspired scriptures. Such is the case, and its utility is that it shows us how we ought to refer and judge all matters that

disturb the peace and harmony of the kingdom of the Messiah.

It is true the question to be settled was doctrinal. But the procedure is the same for the settlement of all disputed questions, whether doctrinal or disciplinary. Besides, if a doctrinal matter may be settled by such an appeal to the elders who acted with the apostles, there is a recognition of a tribunal that is fully competent to adjust all disciplinary questions that may arise in the history of the church. As Paul himself declared that he went up to Jerusalem on this occasion by revelation, there is clearly divine sanction of a tribunal of this character, representing the whole church as the final umpire of appeal in all cases that affect the welfare of the body of Christ. A single precedent of this character is all sufficient to cover all disputations and to give full authority for like procedure whenever occasion arises.

Thus the fifteenth chapter of Acts establishes a principle of reference or appeal in all difficult cases to the presbytery of a different church or churches, and authorizes such elders to come together to consider and to decide the matter. It does not institute stated, annual, biennial or triennial synods, councils or conventions, that may prove dangerous to soul-liberty, but it institutes a special conference or council that may be convoked when exigencies may arise. And it makes such decisions final and ultimate upon the parties. It will be noticed that the decision was written and placed in the hands of two men—"Judas and Silas, chief men among the brethren"—who delivered the decrees to the churches to keep. (Acts xvi:4.) The action of the council was binding on the churches everywhere. No church of Christ has a right to refuse a reference of a trouble, especially if prolonged, whether a primary decision has been reached or not, when there are reasonable grounds of dissatisfaction specified. "If one party refuses reference altogether, it is proof of conscious injustice on its side, and will justify the other party in referring it at its own option."—("Millennial Harbinger," 1841, p. 58.) "On refusal of such a reference, the church refusing cuts herself off from the communion of all

other churches of Christ."—("Millennial Harbinger," 1840, p. 504.)

There is no danger of interminable references and endless appeals by practicing this rational and scriptural mode of preventing unenlightened, partial and arbitrary decisions, and of guaranteeing the enjoyment of personal independence, character and Christian liberty to every member of Christ's kingdom. To make the consent of parties involved necessary to the validity of the acts of a tribunal is to destroy all order and government.

Ex-President Pendleton has well said: "We regard public discipline as a matter under the control, not of the individuals who are subjects of it, but as belonging to the churches. If the forms of discipline and the methods of settling difficulties in the churches are to be left to the parties involved, and made the subject of private agreement, just as the whims or the obstinacy of offenders may require, then we may hand over the kingdom of Heaven and its laws to the lawless and unruly, and give that power which was instituted for the control and discipline of evil-doers into the hands of those upon whom alone it should be exerted, and thus make the Christian Church nothing more than a tribunal of wrangling, violence and shame."—("Millennial Harbinger," 1849, p. 643.)

A. Campbell says: "From the oneness of the kingdom of Christ, it inevitably follows that 'the eldership of other churches' judges a church or its elders 'as an accused or delinquent member of a particular congregation' is to be tried by the constituted eldership of his own congregation."—("Millennial Harbinger," 1841, p. 45.)

"When any improper acts are committed by one congregation affecting the moral or Christian reputation of a church, or when a church falls into a schism, it is the duty of the neighboring churches, first by counsel and exhortation, voluntarily tendered, to correct those evils and to prevent their consummation in alienation, estrangement or separation. But in case of a failure to accomplish these ends by these means, then the church desiring to be held in the fellowship of other churches should refer herself to a com-

mittee of churches, the roots of bitterness or causes of discord and alienation existing, each party or all the members, as the case may be, obliging themselves to submit to such a tribunal as an end of all strife.

"It would, therefore, be expedient that when a church actually falls into a formal schism, and before these means have been resorted to, that neither party should be acknowledged or treated as a church by other congregations until the case is adjudicated, and the matter of schism is either removed or fixed on one incorrigible party.

"That so soon as one party is clearly ascertained to be an incorrigible *faction*, it becomes the duty of all other Christian communities to treat them as the leprous persons were treated under the law—as separated or cut off from the congregation of the Lord."—("Millennial Harbinger," 1845, p. 59.)

It is unnecessary to multiply quotations to the same effect. The principles of justice underlying them are so clearly expressed in apostolic teaching that they rest upon divine authority.

Our rule is thus shown to be sufficient for all cases that can arise between members of the church, or from violations of the law of Christ by unofficial members of the congregation.

Another class of cases remains to be considered. In his admirable treatise on the eldership, Professor J. W. McGarvey says:

"It often happens that in the course of his career an elder falls into bad repute, sometimes unjustly, but oftener justly. Many churches are now languishing under the incubus of an eldership composed partly of such material, and they can never flourish till relieved by the death or resignation of the unfortunate party. It is too hazardous, in such cases, to wait for death to bring desired relief, and voluntary resignations are least likely to occur with just that class of men. It is the duty, therefore, of all churches thus afflicted to call upon the party to resign the office. It is a duty of a most delicate nature, requiring all the wisdom and

prudence of which the leading men of the church are capable, but it must, at all hazards, be done."

There is a tradition that the eldership of a local church is the highest ecclesiastical tribunal on earth; that from its decisions there is no appeal, and there is no holding them to just accountability for their official conduct without their *consent.* This, if conceded, would show that the New Testament is not sufficient as a rule of discipline, since it provides no way by which "self-willed," or otherwise disqualified or incompetent, elders can be disciplined without consent, which such men never give.

Paul gives exact instructions in such cases: "Against an elder receive not an accusation but before two or three witnesses." (I Tim. v:19.) This was written to Timothy, and makes it the duty of an evangelist to receive an accusation against an elder that is brought before him in due form, supported by the required number of witnesses. It then becomes his duty to have the impeached elders brought before one of the recognized tribunals of the New Testament for a fair hearing and a disposition of the case according to the law of Christ and the testimony adduced. If found disqualified, the rule of discipline requires his deposition from office. The same principles and procedure apply to all public men, church officers and preachers.

Public accusations, courts and trials are to be avoided, if it be possible to end troubles without them. The quietest and quickest way to remove troubles and adjust differences is always the best. The rule requires a peaceful and amicable settlement of all difficulties, when it can be done.

N. B.—The foregoing chapter contains the substance of A. Campbell's articles on "Appeals," in "The Harbinger" for 1840 and 1841. His language has been preserved so for as it could be fitted into the general plan of this work.

CHAPTER XI.

Trials.

There is a decided and increasing aversion to ecclesiastical courts, and trials of causes by them. The reasons for this feeling are not difficult to discern, and it must be admitted that they are forceful. A church quarrel is unseemly, a scandal to the cause of Christ, and offensive to upright and pious people. Trials necessarily give publicity to strifes and dissensions which charity seeks to hide from public view.

Then they have been resorted to on trivial occasions, and when there has been manifest necessity for such heroic measures, they have not infrequently been conducted in a disorderly way, that did not promote the ends of justice. Christian people and church officers are not trained in a judicial habit of mind, and are not skillful in legal proceedings. Preachers, especially, are accustomed to treat ecclesiastical patients with plasters and ointments and washings, and anointing with oil, and honeyed words, and soothing syrups, so that they cannot use the probe and the knife effectually in the few desperate cases that demand surgical operation. In the presence of bold and brazen offenders, the only class for whom trials are needed, church officers who are charitable, forbearing and tender-hearted begin to study policy, and to try to heal the hurt slightly, and to compromise the matter, especially if the person involved has money, social influence or popular ability.

There has been so much miscarriage of justice in church trials, and no effective remedy therefor, that they fail to command respect. Besides all this, church courts are not clothed with power to compel the attendance of witnesses in the most important cases, nor to punish those who bear false witness, nor to enforce their decisions in these instances of incorrigi-

bility; and therefore extreme cases are urged into civil courts, that have power, skill and all needful appliances to handle them as they deserve. The trouble in this method of dealing with such transgressors is that civil courts seldom take cognizance of ecclesiastical offenses, and when they do come under civil jurisdiction, such violators of moral and civil law keep out of civil courts as long as possible. They bluster and threaten, and affect injured innocence, and deceive the very elect.

Finally, religious bodies have made for themselves standards of orthodoxy and forms of discipline that are without divine warrant, and have put these formulations of human opinion in the place of the word of God as tests of soundness in doctrine and morals.

The enlightened people of this age repudiate the authoritative claim of human creeds and confessions of faith, and have no confidence in proceedings that seek to bind them upon the consciences of men, and to force them upon the churches.

Trials for heresy are now a stumbling block to many who have the interests of truth at heart, and to the irreligious platform and secular press they are the occasion of all manner of idle jests. It is commonly credited that heresy-hunting was the special vocation of the church during the dark ages, and that its continuance is but an illustration of evils perpetuating themselves. This is a popular error. It is the party-cry of self-conceited liberalism. The spirit of this age, which affects to despise the holding of heresy to proper accountability, makes two blunders. First, it assumes that condemnation of heresy-hunting is proof of intellectual freedom. Secondly, the thing which it condemns is made by the New Testament one of the duties of Christian leaders.

A heretic is a man who corrupts the life or thought of Christians by perverting biblical teaching. Heresy is both practical and doctrinal. A man may be condemned as a heretic by church standards, and yet be breaking with them to accept the plain teaching of the Bible. On the other hand, he may be scripturally correct in all his views and teaching, and yet be causing schism by offenses contrary to

the doctrine which he has learned. Such serve not the Lord Jesus Christ, but their own wills, and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.

No man who understands the present trend of religious thought can be loyal to truth and give heretics, however plausible and popular, his full fellowship. The man who stands guard over the ark of truth to keep its contents from being rifled is doing Heaven's work, even if loose and immature thinkers do accept the suggestion of the adversary of souls, and impolitely and unjustly cry out, "Heresy-hunter!" There is not a syllable in the New Testament which justifies the toleration of those who corrupt God's children, either in life or thought, by a perversion of divine teaching. To expose false teachers is a solemn duty enjoined by the New Testament, and it is criminal cowardice to shirk from it, however painful or unpleasant it may be. It should always be done wisely, and with sound speech and affectionate manner that cannot be condemned.

This is in such striking conflict with current opinion as to demand convincing proof from biblical testimony. Paul wrote: "Hold the form of sound words which thou hast heard from me in faith and love, which is in Christ Jesus." (II Tim. i: 13.) "But abide in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of." (II Tim. iii: 14.) Competent elders or pastors were to be distinguished for "holding fast the faithful word as they have been taught, that they may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convict the gainsayers, whose mouths must be stopped; who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not for filthy lucre's sake." "Wherefore, rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith." (Tit. i: 9–13.) After Ananias and Sapphira were slain for lying about property, and Peter had rebuked Simon the Sorcerer for thinking that the bestowing of the Holy Spirit could be made a matter of merchandise, was there any doubt about God's wish to have practical religion kept pure? Who could venture to lead disciples astray along these lines? To stand in the way of men's accepting Christ was equally dangerous—as the narrative of the punishment of Elymas at

Paphos abundantly shows. In Galatians i: 8, 9, the curse of God is the punishment to be inflicted upon all who perverted the Gospel teaching which Paul presented. To deny a bodily resurrection made faith void and incurred other consequences too dreadful to entertain. (I Cor. xv: 12–19.) To hold that the resurrection was past already, that is, that it was not bodily, but spiritual, was to "err from the faith," and to teach it would "overthrow the faith of some." (II Tim. ii: 16–18.) Hear another apostle testify. With John, belief in the divine Sonship of Jesus was the essential condition of overcoming the world. With startling plainness of speech he tells us that the man who refuses to admit God's witness to the Sonship of Jesus, makes God a liar. He further teaches that the man who does not receive the Lord in His own proper character as the Son of God hath not the life He came to give. It will be edifying to read the texts which make good these propositions. (Compare I John v: 12 with John xx: 30, 31.) Will any candid reader question the conclusion that pure teaching and pure living were ever before the apostles as the two things needful?

What, then, must be done with those who uphold error, who persist in wrong teaching or in wicked living? Paul, by the authority of Jesus Christ, commanded the Corinthians to turn over to Satan one notorious evil-doer. (I Cor. v.) Again, he says: "A man that is heretical, after a first and second admonition, refuse." (Tit. iii: 10.) His own practice was in harmony with it. Of two offenders he says, "I delivered them unto Satan, that they might be taught not to blaspheme." John follows the same course. He said that teachers who did not present Christ in His true character—those who denied the incarnation—were not to be received into Christian homes nor receive a Christian greeting. (II John 10, 11.) The evidence goes even beyond this. The apostles wished to prevent the introduction of error. Paul warns the Ephesian elders against this sin. (Acts xx: 29–31.) He left Timothy also at Ephesus to "charge some that they teach no other doctrine." (I Tim. i: 3.) He foretells the coming of false teachers, who in life and teaching would greatly harm the cause of truth. (II Tim. iii: 1–9.)

To wrong-doers or false teachers who repented there was ever a readiness to grant pardon; but for those who persisted in wrong there was swift and severe punishment. They were put outside, where their example would not corrupt the church, where their punishment might warn others, and where their isolation might bring them to their senses about their real condition, and so lead to repentance.

Justice in the discharge of the delicate and important duties enjoined in these scriptures will sometimes involve trials to determine the question of fact as to whether an alleged false teacher does teach things contrary to the apostles' teaching or not. This must be done before a competent tribunal representing the church of Christ.

John said, "Try the spirits whether they be of God," and he laid down the true criterion of orthodoxy. (I John iv: 1–5.) No church has a right to adopt any other standard by which to try men than the inspired word of God. Jesus commended the church of Ephesus for having "tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and found them liars." (Rev. ii: 2.)

Charity "rejoices not in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth." (I Cor. xiii: 6.) While we are to receive those weak in the faith without regard to differences of opinion, we are not to make teachers of them, nor tolerate unfaith by not protesting against the public denial of plain utterances of God's word, either in doctrine or life, or to speak lightly of Christ's sacrificial work and His appointments. The New Testament provides ample instruction for reaching all such departures from the faith, and for holding unfaithful teachers to accountability.

The plea that the time for bringing teachers of error to account has passed is contrary to scripture. The rebuke of heresy and the punishment of heretics were apostolic practices. Everything indicates that it is a duty of permanent obligation.

We are to give account to God for preserving the purity of the New Testament teaching. Not the passing fashion of our day, but God's word, is our guide in this matter. It may be admitted that present fashions in thought make our

duty more unpleasant, but that fact takes not one whit from our obligation to hold error to account.

Unsound views on fundamental matters received from the apostles prompt punishment. If denying a resurrection of the body overthrew the faith of some in Paul's day, it will make faith void of saving efficacy to-day. No one who understands Paul will plead for a body chemically identical with the body we bury, but Paul called the man a fool who objected to the resurrection because he could not imagine the character of the resurrection body. Does any man suppose that John would have sent forth a preacher with his blessing who denied the divine Sonship of Christ, who held that he was the ideal man, but no more; that he was divine in the same sense in which we are, but only in larger measure? John would have tolerated no juggling with words on this subject, but would have blasted such teachers with the lightning of his holy indignation, and we all know it.

There is no hint in the New Testament that the apostles made any compromise with unsound views. They never told any teacher of error that if he would agree to preach obedience to Christ he might entertain his errors on the resurrection or the divinity of Christ, for example, as private opinions. Paul and John would never have consented to any man's preaching who did so with large mental reservations. They wanted consistent thinking and preaching. They wanted a man's speech to reveal what he thought in his heart.

It is pre-eminently a New Testament virtue to preserve truth in its purity. It is a sin, then, to condone doctrinal error. It is not after the manner of the apostles for editors or preachers or elders to commend any man to the confidence of the churches who is known to be in error on fundamental questions. Until such errors are publicly disavowed, we sin against the God of Truth if we commend such men. This may bear down hard on those who have wandered from the truth. But it is not a matter of debate that the wrong-doer, and not the innocent church, should bear this burden. Let a man purge himself from suspicion, and then the church is

under obligation to obey the word "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ," but not before.

Would you suppress free speech and stifle all inquiry? Not at all. But we are taught to put erroneous free-thinkers outside, where their errors will not corrupt the church. We have no right to indicate what one outside should say, but Paul said the mouths of those who taught error inside must be stopped. There is no evidence that the spirit of inquiry, which we boast as our prerogative, can be allowed to exercise itself in the church without restraint. Nobody who knows the tendency of our scientific spirit, considered broadly, will claim that it develops loyalty to our Lord. The present age is not the only age which has sought to cover the nakedness of a fictitious liberalism with the garments of truth. John Hall and Professor Green are neither small men nor bigots, nor opponents of free speech, because they refuse to accept the views of some younger "heretics" of their own church, and because they deplore such teaching.

The opposition to heresy should not be under the leadership of small men, nor of bigots, nor should it ever be characterized by any other than the spirit of meekness and forbearance. It is not heresy-hunting to proscribe men who plead for liberty in things not revealed, as so many fondly think. Nothing is more despicable than the unwarranted assumptions of zealots for tests of fellowship unknown to the New Testament. Paul was the most unfettered soul in the apostolic age. He was never without law to God. He uncompromisingly opposed error. His example is wisdom in all ages. The liberalism that is indifferent to moral distinctions, and compromises the plain truth of God or perverts its clear intent, is ruinous to human souls.

Heresy trials are sometimes indispensable to the salvation of churches and the exposure and condemnation of false teachers. It cannot be too strongly emphasized that all trials are to be avoided if possible. Free discussion, thorough instruction, affectionate counsel, kind admonition and long forbearance will solve difficulties, remove differences and secure righteous action when there is sincere love of truth and a predominance of the spirit of Christ. But ig-

norance, insincerity and reigning selfishness cannot be overcome by gentle means. It is these incorrigible persons that too frequently are given prominence in the churches that call for the *dernier ressort* to this heroic remedy. The knowledge of the fact that such remedy is at hand and of easy application will have a powerful restraining influence, that will prevent the necessity for its frequent use. The questions that demand investigation in public trials arise from departures from the faith, maladministration of discipline, or personal conduct. The last two come under the one term discipline. Hence, there are two kinds of cases, according to the character of the charges made. These are doctrinal and disciplinary.

The procedure and tribunals are the same for both kinds of cases. The details are necessarily left to sanctified judgment. But it is wise to be guided largely by the principles and methods that have been adopted by courts of justice, and are attested by long experience.

The first requisite is the recognition of the jurisdiction of the proper court to inquire into the case. The elders of a congregation have an unquestionable primary jurisdiction over the members of that congregation as to deportment. If they are open to suspicion of prejudice or partiality in a given case, it ought to be taken to a court of arbitration by mutual consent for final settlement. If the accused party will not consent to thus refer it, the congregation should constitute a special tribunal of its own members, or the elders of a sister church with precisely the same powers as its own eldership. The authority of such a tribunal rests upon precisely the same basis as the authority of the home eldership, *i. e.*, the action of the congregation.

A case begins, in an orderly proceeding, by complainant filing written notice with the clerk of the church, stating the general character of the charge and against whom. The clerk should transmit a copy of said notice to the defendant at once. The court, by its presiding officer, should enter upon the record the time for filing the specifications in full by the complainant, the time thereafter within which the

defendant may file his replication, and the length of time after that for parties to prepare for trial, fixing the date.

When the time appointed arrives, the trial should proceed, unless there be some good legal reason for continuance of the case to another fixed day. If the defendant does not appear in person or by counsel at the time named, a plea of "not guilty" should be entered upon the record and the complainant required to proceed with his statement and the evidence. Decision should be rendered with rigid impartiality after as full a hearing as can be obtained, or is necessary to satisfy the minds of the court, according to the law of Christ and the testimony adduced

A reasonable time for appeal should always be given. If the time expires without notice of appeal, the decision is final. If notice of appeal is filed within the time, it should contain the specific exceptions that are the ground of it. These may be considered by the court, and if they are overruled, and the appellant is aggrieved thereby, it would be wise to refer them to the elders of a sister church. If that eldership sustains the former elders, the appeal fails, and the case ends; if it sustains the exceptions, the appeal is carried before the court of final hearing, the representatives of sister congregations. Or, the case may be referred to this ultimate tribunal at any stage of the proceedings by mutual concurrence of the parties. This tribunal is not a continuous body, as was seen in the preceding chapter, but is convoked only when there is an emergency of such gravity as to demand its convocation. The question as to the gravity of the emergency must be decided by the evangelist of the district in which the difficulty arises. Under a complete New Testament organization, every church will be within the jurisdiction of an evangelist duly chosen and set apart to set in order the things that are wanting in the several congregations. In the absence of this scriptural oversight of a district by a competent evangelist, the elders of a sister church, either alone, or jointly with the elders of adjacent churches whom they may call in, are competent to decide the preliminary question of the importance of the occasion for appeal or reference. A discreet evangelist will sometimes seek the

judgment of such neighboring elders rather than take the whole responsibility himself.

Several questions start at this point as to the final hearing. How is it to be brought about? Who shall constitute the court of last resort? How shall it be convoked? What is the ground of its authority?

All such questions may be covered by a general statement. The wisdom of a church having been found inadequate to the settling of a case of difficulty satisfactorily, and by possibility local excitements or prejudices having been unfavorable to a just judgment, said church, willing not only to "do justly," but bound to cut off all occasion of reproach, should refer the matter to other churches that are well reported of as orderly, intelligent and influential, and that are sufficiently remote to be uninfluenced by any improper local feeling, if any such exist. These sister churches are bound by their common bond of union and Christian fellowship to entertain such an appeal for aid, and in their wisdom should appoint of the "chief men among the brethren" the number asked for by the distressed and disturbed church, to meet at the time, place, and for the purpose specified.

The reasons for this course are obvious and clearly convincing. To duly emphasize them, they are numbered as follows:

(1.) In all important matters, all churches have a common interest.

(2.) Each church knows best whom to appoint of its own body to sit in judgment on an important case.

(3.) An interested party would be prevented from the possibility of forestalling the opinions of individuals of other churches by *ex parte* statements, and then having them chosen as referees.

(4.) It is more respectful for a church or individuals wishing assistance to apply therefor to churches rather than to individual members of them; and the appointment of an individual member by the church appealed to to sit in a council in a given case, is necessary for the proper authorization of the council, and to thus give such weight to their judgment or decision as to make it binding upon the churches

appointing the council, and upon all other churches, since they are constructively represented thereby. As the elders of a congregation are *ex officio* representatives of the church, they may appoint one of their number or some delegate to sit in the case with equal power and authority to act.

Such a course will always secure a tribunal that will be unimpeachable, and before which no church nor individual can refuse to appear and to recognize its jurisdiction without forfeiting all just claims to fellowship with the general body with which such a council of churches is affiliated. Its scriptural authority has been sufficiently vindicated in the preceding chapter, and its decisions will be enforced, when necessary, by the civil courts in questions of property rights and interests that come within their jurisdiction.

The practical recognition of this tribunal of the New Testament for the final settlement of all matters of dissension and disputation, whether doctrinal or disciplinary, will strongly tend to prevent disturbance by self-willed, ambitious or unreasonable men, and to promote the speedy solution of troubles when they break up the harmony and impair the usefulness of local churches. Without its recognition the New Testament provides no remedy for innumerable cases of heresy, maladministration and flagrant injustice that spring up constantly and are liable to afflict the churches everywhere, at any time. If the inspired rule of discipline lacks this indispensable safeguard of justice in the administration of church affairs, the combined wisdom of the uninspired must be invoked to supply the deficiency. Nothing is more repugnant to the whole tenor and spirit of Christianity than church quarrels, divisions, prolonged strifes and angry disputes. When sound doctrine and sweet charity fail to cure this ecclesiastical consumption, the harsher and, if need be, extreme remedy of trial, sentence of the guilty and incorrigible, and excision must be used in order to save the church from scandal, corruption and death.

It should be noted here that cases of official misdemeanor by the elders of a church can only be brought before a court composed of the representatives of a sister church or of sister churches, since there is no tribunal in the local congre-

gation competent to try such cases; and it may be well doubted whether any elder is competent to sit in the case of a co-elder in the same congregation who is accused of personal offenses. The procedure in the impeachment of elders is essentially the same as in the case of reference or appeal.

As churches are not furnished with legal forms nor court machinery, and it is the purpose of this treatise to be helpful, a few hints are here given as to the details of proceeding in trials:

Paul recognizes common report as a sufficient ground for prosecuting a case of public scandal. (II Cor. v: 1.) When this becomes known to the rulers of the church, they should institute a thorough and impartial investigation. To prevent biasing their own minds by looking up the evidence, and to save the necessity for some one to become a volunteer prosecutor of public offenses, the elders may appoint a suitable person to bring the case before them in proper form, and to procure and present the evidence at the time fixed. In personal offenses, the aggrieved party will present his complaint in person, or by an attorney of his own choosing, after he has taken the preliminary steps required by the law of Christ in such instances. (Matt. xviii:15-20.)

The orderly beginning of a case is the filing of written notice with the church clerk, stating the general charge, naming the accused, and signed by the complainant. A copy should be furnished by the clerk to the person named.

The elders should be informed of the notice at once, and have entered upon the records the time within which the bill of specifications must be filed and the time thereafter within which replication may be filed, and allowing sufficient length of time after that for the preparation for trial, the day and hour for hearing should be fixed, and unless there be good legal reason for delay the trial should proceed at once.

If the accused fail to put in an appearance at the time named, since there is no power in the church to compel attendance, the clerk should be instructed to enter upon the record a plea of "not guilty," and the trial should proceed as though both parties were present. If the complainant

fail to appear without giving justifiable reason for absence, the case should be dismissed as without cause.

If either party, upon sufficient reason specified, asks for change of venue by reference of the whole matter to the court of last resort for final hearing and settlement, the request should be granted, and the case speedily ended. If the case is tried and a decision is rendered, at least twenty days should be given within which the defeated party may appeal. If no notice of appeal is recorded within the specified time, the case ends. The two controlling ideas in all church trials should be impartial justice to all concerned, and protection of the cause of Christ from avoidable injury by a speedy termination of the unseemly strife and wrong-doing.

When a trouble reaches a point where a trial cannot be avoided, it passes into a stage in which all obligations to secrecy are ended. Trials should be open to all who desire to hear them. Secret trials are dangerous, and offer special opportunity for miscarriage of justice and for whitewashing very black characters. They can never command general respect for their findings.

All evidence should be taken in open court or before an authorized representative of a church tribunal—before the elders of the church or a commissioner appointed by them. Testimony should be taken in legal form, upon due notice to both parties, with opportunity for cross-examination of witnesses. The requirement of an oath in ecclesiastical proceedings is not in accordance with the teaching of the New Testament, and is entirely useless, as there is no power to inflict the pains and penalties of perjury. But witnesses should be solemnly reminded of the Christian obligation to always tell the truth, and that when in the presence of an officer in the kingdom of Christ they should feel and act as they would in the personal presence of the King.

The trial should be conducted with all the judicial coolness, solemnity and fairness of a high, honorable court of justice, so as to impress all with the dignity and importance of the occasion. An appropriate opening prayer is the only specially religious feature that should characterize the proceedings. When the issue is finally determined, the decis-

ion should be carried into effect by the methods described in the chapter on Church Discipline.

Some forms given in the Appendix may be useful in the preparation of necessary papers.

CHAPTER XII.

PRACTICAL UNITY.

The church of Christ is a glorious fellowship. It is the perfected fruit of divine philanthropy. It is world-wide in its offers of peace and pardon, and invites to its privileges, sacrifices and honors whosoever will of every family, tribe and nation. It is not primarily an organization, but an *ecclesia*,—the called-out from the world of men and women who have entered into personal and peaceful relationship to the enthroned Lord, through faith in Him and obedience to His authority. Jesus, the Christ of God, is the rock of salvation to all who are thus built upon this foundation. He is the acknowledged Head of the church, which is called the body of Christ. There is one head for the body and one body for the head. No body has two heads, and no head has two bodies, unless they be monstrosities.

This divine organism has the power of growth. In it there is a life that pervades its every part. Jesus is the fountain of that life. He is the true vine, and every disciple of His is a living branch in that vine, vitalized by the Holy Spirit. Each branch lives and bears fruit like its fellow branch by virtue of its connection with the vine and the life it draws from it. This is vital union. It produces growth and heavenly fruit.

As all branches have the same vital union with the vine, in so far as they grow and bear fruit according to "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus," they are in union with each other.

If any number of individual branches hold their union with the true vine so loosely as to receive another kind of influence and grow and bear fruit more or less according to this other law of life, division and confusion are the inevita-

ble result. As a matter of fact, this is what has happened to the followers of Christ. Doctrines and dogmas from human leaders, and uncertain speculations, have wrought out their legitimate results in a divided church. Building on other foundations than that laid by the divine Architect, and the coming in of other legislation than that of Christ, have caused confusion and destroyed the unity and beautiful symmetry of Christ's spiritual edifice.

It is absolutely certain that Jesus founded one church, and only one church, on earth. Its unity is involved in its universality. There can be but one "holy catholic church" within the territory of this world. Hence the unity of the church is generally assumed, but sometimes declared, in the apostolic writings. Sects may be numerous, as they are, but it is an awful crime to rend the body of Christ. It is to pierce the side and wound afresh the Son of God. From that wound the life blood of the body of Christ flows, and there is consequent weakness and inefficiency.

Paul uses a natural and appropriate simile: "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ. For by one Spirit, are we all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Gentiles, whether bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. For the body is not one member but many." "Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular" (I Cor. xii:12–28), *i. e.*, in part.

The "ye" in this passage is not limited to the church at Corinth, but includes "all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord," as expressly stated in the address of the epistle. (I Cor. i:2.)

The church *at* or *in* a place is not *the* body of Christ. It is a member of the body, precisely as the individuals composing it are severally members of the local assembly. It has been well said that *a* church is but a fractional part of *the* church. The church is always represented as one and indivisible.

This scriptural conception of the unity of the Christian church is not realized in any existing ecclesiastical organization. No religious body in this age embraces all individ-

ual members of the body of Christ. This is the ideal unity which is to be earnestly sought for, but can never be attained through competitive denominations. It comprehends all the truth and Christliness in all denominations, and excludes all divisive doctrines, names and rites that are unauthorized by Christ and distinguish sects from each other. The prayer of Christ for the oneness of believers in Him specifies the apostles' word as the means of its realization. The restoration of the apostolic commission to its true place in preaching the Gospel will lead to primitive unity on this authoritative basis.

It is equally certain that the one church of Jesus Christ is visibly represented in this world in the local congregations of His disciples, covenanted together for Christian fellowship, service and worship. Hence we read of "the church of God which is at Corinth," and "the saints which are at Ephesus" are called "the church of Ephesus." The church in Smyrna, in Pergamos, in Thyatira, in Sardis, in Philadelphia and in Laodicea, with that of Ephesus, are "the seven churches in Asia." Paul writes concerning "the churches in Galatia" (I Cor. xvi:1), and Luke says, "the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria." (Acts ix: 30, R. V.) Separate assemblies, necessitated by mere convenience, for the performance of public duties and the enjoyment of religious privileges are not different bodies, possessing all the powers and performing all the functions of a complete and independent organism. They are severally members of the general body, each doing its own work in harmony with its vital connection with the larger organization of which it is a part. So every individual church on earth stands to the whole church of Christ as one individual man to one particular church, and the churches on earth are severally as much bound to co-operate with the whole body of Christ in all matters of public interest, as one individual member in any particular church is bound to co-operate with it in any or in all public acts and duties.

Each assembly has relation to all like assemblies, as each member of the human body has to the other members of the

same body. To these several congregations, as truly as to the individuals of the same congregation, Paul's language applies. "Now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him. And if they were all one member, where is the body? But now are they many members, yet but one body." (I Cor. xii:18–20.)

These local churches sustain mutual relations and owe mutual obligations to each other. There is unity in these pluralities. They stand on the same doctrinal basis which is their bond of union. Paul expands this bond of peace into seven items,—the seven pillars of wisdom's house. "There is one body and one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in you all." (Eph. iv:4–6.) Therefore all are under the same ecclesiastical law, the revealed will of the one Lord, and constitute the holy temple in the Lord in whom they are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit. (Eph. ii:21, 22.)

This binds them to the observance of the same ordinances and to be governed by the supreme law of love to God and to each other. This intimate relationship and sweet fellowship of the Spirit is expressed by the familiar phrase, "sister churches." From these arise mutual duties and sympathies so beautifully described by Paul in the suffering, care, honor, and rejoicing, one member with another. (I Cor. xii:25, 26.) This is true of churches as well as individuals. They are enjoined to walk by the same rule and mind the same thing. (Phil. iii:16.) Having the same rule of discipline, they are mutually bound to respect the acts of each other so far as they accord with that rule. In case of dispute as to just application of that rule in any given instance, all are equally interested in the settlement of it. Hence sister churches are required to extend help to an afflicted sister church, and the suffering church is likewise bound to seek and to accept the counsel of other churches in association with it.

Whether the trouble be doctrinal or disciplinary, the refusal of such help when solicited, or the rejection of it when proffered, is a direct violation of good faith. It is a prac-

tical denial of sisterly relationship, a breaking of the bond of union, a repudiation of mutual obligations, and so an end of ecclesiastical unity. This is schism, or practical heresy, which is severely condemned in the word of God. (Rom. xvi:17, 18; I Cor. i:10.)

Unity and independency are a contradiction in terms when by independency is meant the full competency of every distinct church to manage, without appeal, its own affairs. When its affairs are so managed as to affect injuriously the interests of other churches, they cease to be its own affairs, and come properly under the supervision of those affected thereby. The doctrine, discipline, and the recognition of the public ministry are matters of general, and not mere local, interest.

No church has a right to shield heresy, nor to cover scandal from neglect or abuse of discipline, by a cloak of independency. Sister churches have a clear right to self-protection from such injury to themselves by an inquiry into the condition of an offending church; and this right will be exercised in some way. The only question here is whether this inquiry shall be made in a regular, orderly way, that leads to peace and harmony, or shall it be made in an irregular, informal way, that leaves the dispute unsettled, and so perpetuates disunity and extends its baneful influence to other churches.

No local church has a right, except under extraordinary circumstances, to send forth or to depose a preacher of the Gospel, for all churches in affiliation are honored or compromised by the character and services of its public representatives. In all such matters of general importance churches are mutually dependent upon, and responsible to, each other. They are alike under law to Christ and equally concerned in the maintenance of sound doctrine, a pure ministry, and righteous and wise administration of church affairs.

Paul rebukes the factious spirit of extreme independency in the detailed application of his apt simile in I Corinthians xii:15–24.

So in everything that concerns the whole body, no local

congregation can say to other churches, "I have no need of thee." The judicial eye cannot say to the executive hand, "I have no need of thee." Even the infallible head does not say to the uncomely feet, "I have no need of thee." The uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness because of their relation to those of greater honor and influence.

How contrary to this forceful illustration of mutual helpfulness and dependence is the practice of some weak, disorderly or erring churches that put on airs of independence and spurn the friendly offices of well-regulated, thrifty churches, who would kindly bestow upon them more strength and usefulness!

"But God has tempered the body together; having given more abundant honor to that part which lacked, there should be no schism in the body, but that members should have the same care one for another."

He who pushes his notions of congregational independency to the point of carving the body of Christ into numberless antagonistic democracies, sacrifices the truth of God for a phantasm of church polity. On this theory the "Coronation" hymn should be sung

> Let every kindred, every tribe,
> On this terrestrial ball,
> To *whim* all majesty ascribe,
> And crown *whim* Lord of all!

But this unwarranted extreme is a hideous deformity. It is the last ditch of a self-willed officiary or an apostate people.

"He that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest that they are wrought in God." (John iii:21)

The law of love requires every one to please not himself but his neighbor, for his good to edification, that all "may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." (Rom. xv:2–6.) Love does not put on airs of independence, but condescends, yields, attracts, edifies and associates individuals and churches.

Practical unity is the co-operation of the whole body of Christ in the edification of itself and in the evangelization

of the world. Without this, doctrinal and emotional unity will be void of any worthy result. A true basis of unity is fundamental, but it is not the superstructure. This is a fitly joining together of all parts of the whole body, and compacting them by that which every joint supplies, so there may be effectual working in the measure of every part, making increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love. (Eph. iv:16.) "The whole body" includes all its parts,—the members of separate congregations; and "the measure of every part" includes the ability of each local church as well as of individuals.

It is a cramped and vicious interpretation that fits the phrase "the whole body" to each distinct company of believers, and limits every part to individual members. But even this forced and unjustifiable use of this suggestive passage leads to the same conclusion.

Christian obligation is placed upon all alike, and duty enjoined on one company of believers rests upon all companies of Christ's followers with equal weight. Otherwise, all Christian obligation ceased with the primitive age. The ground principle of the sufficiencyof the New Testament as a rule of faith and discipline assumes that the instruction of the apostles to each particular church of their age binds all modern churches under like circumstances to do the same things.

Paul was not laying down a precept in this passage but he declared a fact with regard to all who are under Christ, the Head of the body. "From him, the whole body is fitly joined together." There is a joining *together*, not a putting asunder, of the several parts, whether individuals or churches, whether in one worshiping assembly, or distributed into many. There are ligaments at each joining of parts that facilitate effectual working together in the measure of the usefulness of each. This is co-operation, local and general, for self-edification and the world's evangelization. There is and can be no effectual working for these evangelical purposes without such co-operation. Dislocation of joints or rheumatic inflammation produces pain and uselessness. These must be reduced or removed by heroic treat-

ment or tender nursing, with kindness and sometimes long-suffering. In co-operative unity of all churches of Christ, there is strength sufficient to overcome the world and to overthrow all forms of unbelief and irreligion.

The supreme necessity for rational and scriptural unity among Christians is more and more apparent to thoughtful minds. It is demanded by the common responsibility for the distribution of the Bible at home and abroad; for the sending of laborers into the great mission fields in this and other lands; for the elevation and purity of the Christian ministry; for the protection of the churches from the flood of imposture and fraud that is pouring in upon unsuspecting people from irresponsible, plausible and deceitful men; for the concentration of the energies of the millions of Israel in Christian effort; and for such combination of evangelical forces as is ample to meet and turn back the mightiest organized foe of primitive Christianity that has ever appeared in human history,—that wily and ever-active enemy of modern civilization called Roman Catholicism.

This politico-religious ecclesiasticism has exhibited the marvelous power of unity in a thorough organization of its forces amidst the almost endless variations in doctrine that have characterized papacy. It is the greatest mystery of iniquity that has ever worked with all the deceivableness of unrighteousness to enslave the human mind and conscience, and to block the wheels of progress adown the centuries. It is conspiring to-day to overturn American institutions, which are the fruit of Christian enlightenment and the triumph of Protestant principles.

If Protestant denominations are not drawn together by the internal attraction toward a common center of spiritual unity in Christ, they will yet be pressed into closer contact and more friendly alliance by the external force of a common danger and the united energies of a persistent and sagacious enemy. A return to the cardinal principles of the reformation of the sixteenth century in theory and in practice will restore the primitive unity of the church. With such a doctrinal and spiritual harmony, and the restoration of the primitive polity in all its elements and adaptability,

the Protestant forces would be absolutely invincible against all opposition, whether from irreligion or false and perverted religion.

Surely, the exaltation of Jesus Christ and His law above all human leaders and legislation will give to Christendom co-operation instead of competition in Christian work! This will be practical unity, which is first in the order of Christ's commission. "Go ye, therefore, and make disciples of all nations" is the supreme imperative of highest authority in heaven and on earth. The momentum accumulated by sincere and earnest obedience to this primary duty of the church by all Christ's followers will bring believing souls into such loving sympathy and intimate fellowship that doctrinal differences will be easily adjusted, and prejudice will vanish like vapor before the splendor of the rising sun.

There will still remain the practical solution of questions arising out of differing church polities. The statement of the solution is easy and simple. The combination of the clearly scriptural features of all forms of church government in one simple, comprehensive, scriptural church polity, and the laying aside of all that is extra-biblical in each, will meet every fair demand in all bodies and present a united church for aggressive work.

The great triumphs over the powers of this world which the church is yet to win will not be won by a rationalistic or a divided church. Rationalism and sectarianism are both sources of weakness. One dissipates the divine power of the Gospel, while the other divides and obscures it.

Evangelicism and catholicity are elements of strength. The one unites the members of the entire body with Christ —the source of spiritual power—and the other conserves this vital force by keeping the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. The omission of either feature is a fatal defect. The absence of sectarianism without the vitalizing energy of evangelical faith is neither fitness nor adequacy for the mighty tasks that God has laid on His church. Evangelical faith, if hampered, divided and obscured by sectarianism, is unequal to the world's evangelization, as the best minds of Christendom now see.

All effective church government is substantially the same under all forms. There are certain things that are essential to the harmony, order and efficiency of any society, whether religious or secular.

These essentials must be secured in some way, and God's way is the simplest and best. The familiar maxim, "In essentials, unity; in non-essentials, liberty; in all things, charity," applies here as forcefully as in other elements of the union problem.

Polity is not a matter of life and death to the individual; but the want of correct polity has been death to many churches that, with its fostering care, might have been nursed into life and vigorous health.

Jesus prayed that the members of His body might be one, as He and His father were one.

The word "one," as applied to pluralities of persons, has but three legitimate and virtuous applications in the scriptures. The Father and the Son, Jesus Christ, are one. All who believe on Him through the word of His apostles are one. The husband and wife are one. Spiritually, this oneness consists in sameness in knowledge, as between Father and Son, and as between human beings in sameness in faith, and in affection and will. Believers must be one in faith in Christ, in supreme love for Him, and in obedience to Him.

Practically, this oneness consists in action. It is identity of aim, of interest and of honor. These mutualities manifest themselves in co-operation for all common aims and objects; for a mutual care for each other; and in united effort to promote the common welfare and reciprocal interests.

Practical unity includes, at least, three things: (1.) A properly recognized public ministry. Evangelists and pastors, qualified by character and culture, should be duly approved by ordination by official representatives of the churches. This recognition and certification are necessary to give public servants general acceptance, and to guard churches against imposition from unworthy men. It also prevents dissensions that are sure to spring up over persons

of doubtful reputation. The church should have knowledge of its approved ministers of the word.

(2.) The right of appeal exercised in some simple mode of procedure that will secure a prompt determination of disputes that arise in or between congregations by the concentrated wisdom of the general body. This right is inherent in the unity of the body.

When this heavenly union is disturbed by neglect of discipline, maladministration, or by departure from the faith, it cannot be restored without an investigation, adjudication and reconciliation. This must be done, or the dissatisfaction must wear out or wear the church out. The latter is the usual result. An appeal is the orderly proceeding in bringing a grievance before a representative council that has not been adjudicated satisfactorily by a congregation or its officiary. Personal rights and the unity of the church cannot be maintained without this right. It is the safeguard against ecclesiastical tyranny, and is demanded by simplest principles of justice. It is the divine channel through which the life and recuperative energies of the whole body flow to an impaired member to restore it to healthful action and usefulness.

(3.) The association of sister churches within a city or district of practicable limits for mutual helpfulness, and the concentration of their efforts in extending the kingdom of Christ. The ultimate aim and motive of unity is that the world may believe on the Son of God. This is the grand mission of the church, and failure at this point is to frustrate the eternal purpose of God in founding His kingdom among men.

There is no heresy more deadly, and no disloyalty more treasonable, than that which, for any cause or pretense whatever, breaks up the unity of the body, exorcises the spirit of sweet communion of saints and holy fellowship with Christ in the redemption of the race, and paralyzes the mighty arm of Gospel power which God makes bare to save men through a united church.

The time has fully come when the spirit of love, loyalty and lowliness should so fill all the house where the re-

deemed hosts of our God are sitting in heavenly places, that they will all speak the same thing as the Spirit gives them utterance, that there be no divisions among them, but that they be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment, as becomes saints.

All doctrine, all ordinances, all methods, and all polities are valuable only as they contribute to this blessed consummation and so hasten the glorious day when all the regiments of the blood-stained Captain of our salvation shall march on together in solid column to the conquest of the world, "as clear as the sun, as fair as the moon, and as terrible as an army with banners." Then great voices in heaven will be heard saying, "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever." (Rev. xi:15.)

APPENDIX.

APPENDIX.

There are some practical questions relating to the subject of church discipline which require some attention, although they do not come strictly within the discussion of the principles involved. These matters will, therefore, be briefly considered in this appendix.

I. MODE OF PROCEDURE IN EXCLUDING DISORDERLY MEMBERS.

After repeated efforts without avail have been made to reclaim the disorderly person, and it is decided by the elders to recommend his exclusion from the church, the following order of procedure should be observed:

(1.) The elder of the church who presides at its meetings (usually the minister located with the church) reports to the congregation the recommendation of the elders, with the offense committed.

(2.) He then asks if any member knows any reason why this recommendation should not be approved by the church, requesting that objections be made to the elders privately, and giving time (one or two weeks) for such objections to be presented. If any one offers reasons against such action, the elders should patiently hear and consider the objections; if they are found sufficient, the elders will report accordingly; but if the objections are insufficient, they will so report, and the objections will be overruled. If any one thinks that further effort should be made to reclaim the erring one, give that person or any one else an opportunity to make such further effort and to report the result to the elders.

(3.) When all efforts fail, and the time designated has expired with no reasonable objections being offered, announce to the congregation that the recommendation of the elders has been approved by the church.

(4.) The presiding officer should then ask the congregation to arise and remain standing while the act of withdrawal is performed.

(5.) Let the presiding officer then pronounce distinctly and solemnly something like the following words:

"In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Church of Christ in (naming the place) does hereby withdraw fellowship from (naming the person) for (naming the offense.)"

(6.) While all are standing, pray that God's blessing may rest upon the action of the church, that the members may be quickened thereby to greater zeal, piety and faithfulness, and that the excluded one may be yet restored to fellowship with the church and with Christ.

The above procedure, if properly and lovingly carried out, will render the act of exclusion very solemn and impressive, and make it effective for good to the church.

II. CHURCH LETTERS.

Much mischief and confusion arise from the carelessness exercised with reference to church letters. Sometimes such letters are given in good faith, and the persons receiving them fail to unite with another church when they have an opportunity to do so. Persons holding church letters have lived for years in towns where there was a church not only without uniting with the church, but actually refusing to unite when asked to do so. This is wrong, and something should be done to correct this evil. Again, persons sometimes ask for letters from a church without intending to move out of the locality where the church is situated. This indicates a wrong somewhere. Moreover, letters are asked sometimes by persons who are not in good standing, and churches sometimes grant such letters of commendation to get rid of them. This is a great wrong, and it is to be hoped that it is very rarely perpetrated.

An essential requisite of a church letter is *that it shall certify to the truth.* Church officers ought to have too high a sense of honor and be too conscientious to append their signatures to an untruth. If the person asking for a letter is in good standing, certify to the fact; but if not, either require

him to make his standing good, or refuse to give him a letter of commendation. If desired, a letter stating strictly the facts in the case might be given to the member, or sent to the officers of the church that he wishes to join. Concerning church letters the following suggestions are offered:

(1.) Give letters of commendation only to those who are worthy of them.

(2.) Give, if at all, to those not in good standing a letter stating the facts, and commend them to the sympathy, love and watch-care of the church.

(3.) If a letter is asked for to some particular congregation, address the letter to that church, and say at the close of it, "When notice is received from you that he (or she) has taken membership with you, his (or her) connection with this church will cease."

(4.) If the letter asked for is not to any particular congregation, give a general letter of commendation, and at its close say, "This certificate is valid only for one year from its date, except where there has been no opportunity of presenting it."

(5.) If a letter is asked for by a member who has been gone for some time, give a letter stating the standing of such member at the time he went away.

If the above suggestions are carefully and faithfully followed, some, at least, of the evils incident to granting church letters will be avoided.

III. REVISION OF CHURCH RECORDS.

As often as once in eight or ten years a church register should be revised, a new list of names made out and written in the record. In the course of years there will be found among the names a large number of names of persons who are no longer members of the church. Some of the persons have died; some of them have been dismissed by letter; others have been excluded. Now, when there are many such names among those who are still members of the church, it renders it difficult to determine the membership of the church. It becomes necessary, then, to make out a new list of names in order to ascertain the actual membership. In doing this,

some difficulties arise. Some have moved away without taking letters; of these, some, perhaps, were unworthy of fellowship when they left, but had not been excluded. Others have been gone for years, and no one knows where they are, or what is their standing as Christians; and the question arises, What shall be done in such cases?

The following rules have been used in some cases in revising church records. It is not claimed that they are perfect, but they are given as an example of an attempt to solve, at least partially, the perplexing problem which some church records present:

(1.) Let church members who have moved away and are in good standing be requested to take letters and unite with the Church of Christ where they now live in all cases where there is such a church.

(2.) In the cases of non-resident members who were unworthy of fellowship when they left, let a statement of this fact be entered on the church record opposite their respective names and their names be dropped from the list of members.

(3.) Let there be dropped from the list of members the names of all other non-resident members who have been absent more than three years, unless their post-office address and Christian standing are known to the church.

(4.) Let the church withdraw fellowship from resident members who walk disorderly and cannot be reclaimed.

An eliminating process, such as the above rules indicate, is positively needed to bring many church records to anything like a true statement of the membership of the church. It is simply amazing how conspicuously inexact some records are, and how imperfectly they have been kept.

Non-resident members ought to communicate with the elders at least once a year, and keep them informed as to their whereabouts and their desires and purposes with reference to the Christian life. This will enable the officers of the church to form a tolerably correct judgment as to their Christian standing.

In conclusion, greater care should be exercised in keeping

church records, so that they may more accurately represent the actual condition of the church.

FORMS.

(A) NOTICE OF TRIAL.

Public Offenses.

Notice is hereby given of a charge of (here name the same) against A. B., a member of the church at.....

In behalf of the said church.

C. D.

(Place and date.)

Personal Trespass.

Notice is hereby given of a charge of.....against A. B., as member of the.....Church at..... .....by

C. D., Complainant.

(Place and date.)

A bill of specifications filed with the clerk is sufficient notice. Generally it is better to withhold it until the elders have an opportunity for private adjustment.

The bill of specifications should be brief as possible without obscurity in statement. It should give time, place and circumstances of the alleged instances. There can be no prescribed form. But the specifications should be approved by the court as clear and definite before the accused is called upon to reply to them.

(B) LETTER MISSIVE.

The letter convoking a council of sister churches for a final hearing is called the "Letter Missive." It should briefly state the antecedent facts in the case, name the churches to be represented in the council, and define the purpose of the call. The hearing should be strictly confined within the limit of the purpose thus defined, as any act of the council outside of that specified object would be extra-judicial and without authority.

The following were used substantially as here given. The first is a case of appeal in which the elders of a church refused an appeal.

Letter Missive.

.....189..

To the Churches of Christ at.....
and.....

DEAR BRETHREN:

It becomes our duty to bring to your attention an important matter which concerns all the churches.

On Lord's Day, ..., Mr. ....., who was for years an active and worthy member of the church at ....., was disfellowshipped by the official board of said church, as, it is alleged, without a hearing, and without even charges of violation of Christian law. ..(Number).. members of the church at ..... protest against this action as unjust, unscriptural and as an abuse of authority. A respectful request for an impartial investigation of the case has been declined by the official board.

The exceptions taken to this action embrace the following vital points, viz.:

First. The proper administration of church discipline.

Second. The personal rights of the membership.

Third. The doctrinal position of the church at....., under the teaching of .....

After a careful consideration of the questions involved in all their bearings, it is our clear conviction that the case is of such character as to demand a prompt and a thorough investigation by a representative council of the churches. Accordingly, we have courteously requested the board of officers of the church at ..... to unite with us in calling such council or committee. They have refused to do so. This makes our duty the more imperative, and leaves upon them the responsibility of their refusal.

Therefore, a council of Christian Churches (here name churches) ....., is hereby called to meet at....., in ....., on ...., at ..... M., to investigate the

whole case between ..... and the official board of the church at ....., and to render decision according to the law of the Lord and the testimony which will be presented.

You are earnestly invited to participate in the deliberations of said council by your representative, either your pastor or some other brother, in whose judgment you have entire confidence.

Yours in the bond of Christian fellowship.

..... } Elders of the church at
..... } .....

....., 189..

The Christian Church at..... to the Christian Church at.....

Greeting:

DEAR BRETHREN: (Here give a brief history of the trouble.).....

It becomes our duty to make a final disposition of the case. In view of its importance and the general interest of the questions involved, we do hereby convoke a council of the Christian Churches at....., and ..... to meet by their representatives on.....at ....., to consider and render decision upon the following points: (here specify the questions at issue.).....

Done by order of the church (or elders.)

.....Clerk.

A General Form.

.....189..

The Christian Church at..... to the Christian Church at.....

Greeting:

You are cordially requested to sit in a council of churches, consisting of representatives from the sister churches at (name six churches, or not less than three)..... that is called to meet at....., on.....

.....at.....o'clock...., for the purpose of final hearing and decision of questions at issue between.....(Name of parties).....

These questions are:

(1.) (Specify points in dispute.) .....

(2.) .....

(3.) .....

In behalf of the (church, complainants, or defendants, as the case may be.)

.....

Evangelist, Clerk or Counsel.

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